



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

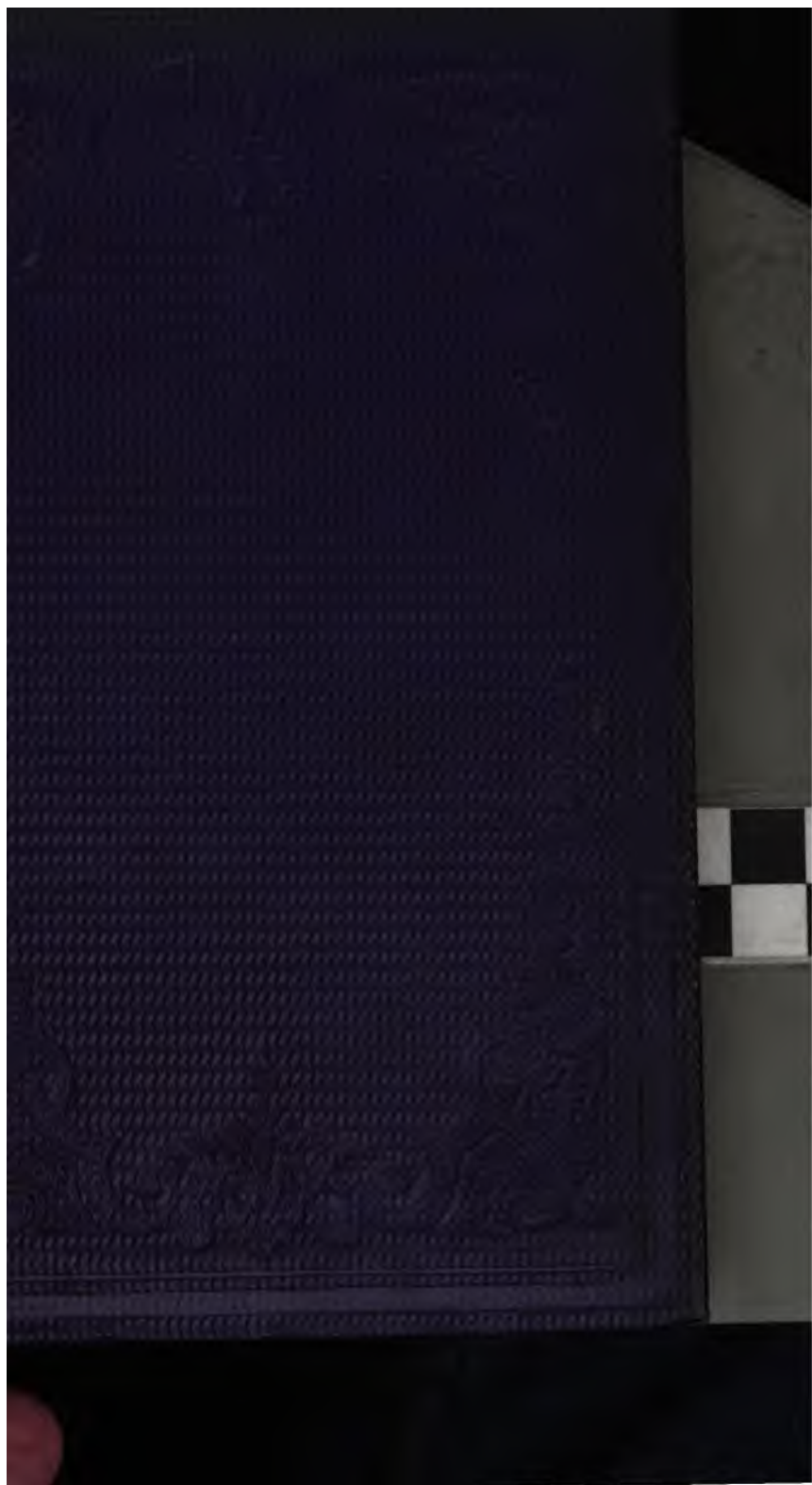
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

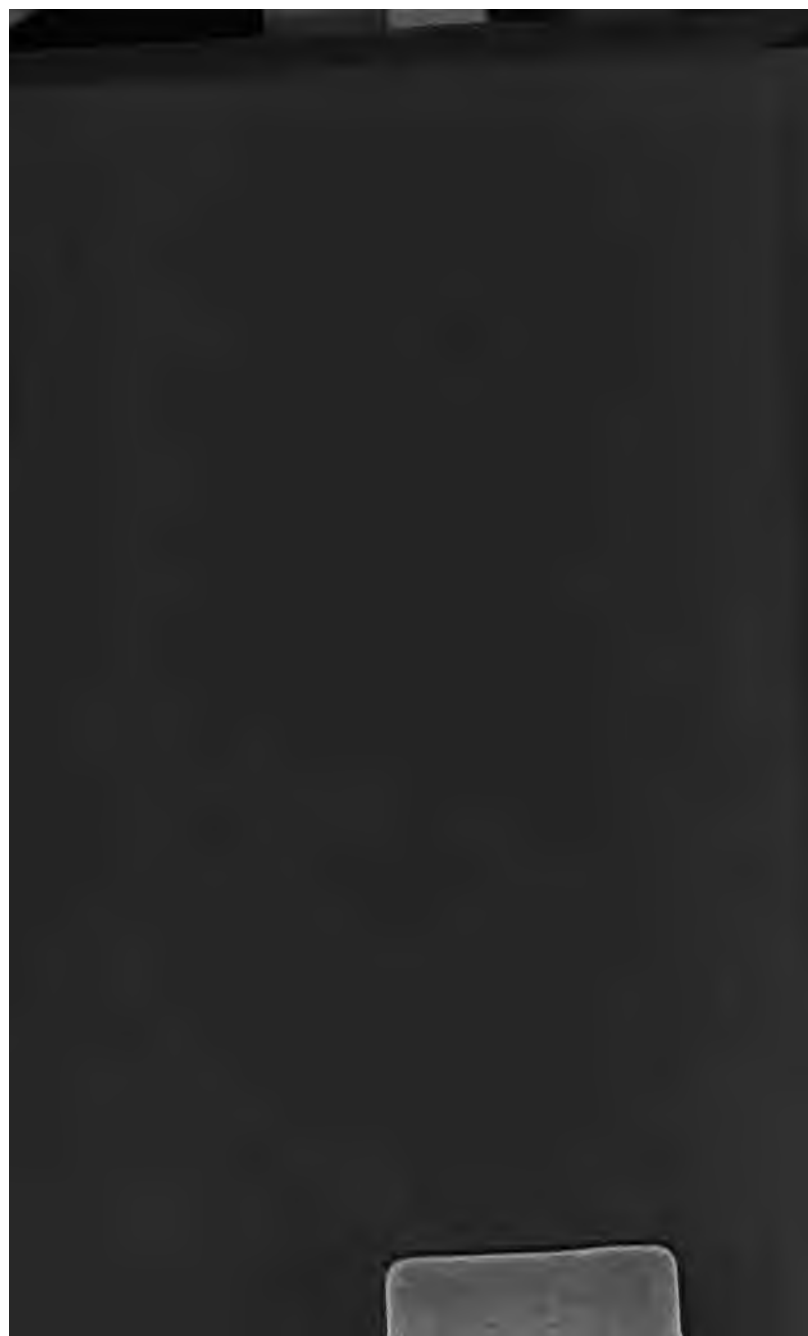
We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>









A COMMENTARY

ON "THE

REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST,

WHICH

GOD GAVE UNTO HIM, TO SHOW UNTO HIS SERVANTS THINGS WHICH
MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS."

BY
A PHYSICIAN.

SECOND EDITION.

DUBLIN:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR BY
E. MADDEN, 2; CHURCH LANE.

1863.

100. u. 73.

PRINTED BY E. MADDEN, CHURCH LANE, DUBLIN.



A COMMENTARY
ON
THE BOOK OF REVELATION, &c.

SECTION I.—*Introduction.*

BEFORE entering upon the following pages, I would premise that the student of the Apocalypse undertakes a task of great labour and difficulty. Let him not think that the study can be taken up as a mere occupation of pastime, or as the easy gratification of curiosity. If he comes unprepared for a great and protracted effort, let him lay aside the book.

An appeal to the candid student of the Apocalypse will assuredly obtain from him an admission that all the commentaries on this mysterious book, ever published, have been most unsatisfactory and singularly infelicitous. The great defect of them all is,—a total want of any *principle of interpretation* to control, govern, guide, or restrict the commentator's fancy. The very proposal, therefore, of a principle is surely a step in the right direction. For though it were found to be defective or even incorrect, yet it might engage the more successful efforts of others, and lead to the discovery of an adequate and a true solution of the mystical characters and language of the book.

Men do not generally reflect on the very important influence which the Apocalypse operates on the public Christian mind. If there had existed no scripture such as the Apocalypse to engage the attention and expectations of men, and to prepare them for the very long and indeed indefinite succession of ages of calamity,—I cannot but think that so great a void of all intimation of God's purposes and terrestrial regards would have had a very unfavourable and sceptical effect upon the minds of many, whose weakness requires absolutely some support from a warranted conviction of the divine purpose in delaying the *consummation of its promises*—the believer's hopes. Eighteen

hundred years have now passed since the Saviour sojourned on earth. What and if eighteen thousand years should elapse? To some persons such a lengthened delay may appear improbable, or even morally impossible, consistently with intimations furnished in the Epistles and other scriptures. To my mind, however, such a delay can be pronounced, neither impossible nor even improbable. But under the circumstances of such a delay, I cannot help apprehending that, in the absence of an Apocalypse, the Christian world would grow tired of waiting, and would not be loath to resort to some more promising scheme to satisfy their impatience; and might begin to reason, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things remain as they were." The divine operations, however, treated of in the Apocalypse are such as might fill even so great a lapse of time or even a much greater, without necessarily inducing men to tremble or to hope for the failure of the predicted issue. The true believer will, I know, be supported under all such circumstances, in "the patient waiting for the coming of the Lord." But even the true believer retains his nature of unbelief, "his besetting sin:" and sure I am, that he feels the benefit of such influence as the Apocalypse supplies, though he may never have distinctly agitated the subject in his mind. Indeed, we cannot reasonably conceive that such a revelation would have been made, unless the necessity of such a support had existed and had been recognised by the holy spirit.

The above quoted title of the Apocalypse does not seem to warrant the popular character of the book, viz., that, in respect of many of the incidents, it is a narrative of *miracle*. It seems to announce simply a history of incidents not otherwise miraculous than as they are the predictions uttered by the spirit of omniscience. The title professes the book to be simply a history of natural events written before their occurrence: a prediction, delivered indeed in figurative and mysterious terms, of such events as the common historian would deliver in ordinary and unfigurative terms after they had occurred. Miracle does not seem to be intimated by this simple title. But, inasmuch as the revelation was intended for the edification and consolation

of a suffering people of God in all ages, and not for the satisfaction of false professors (from whom such topics, one would think, ought rather to be concealed), it is therefore delivered in terms, not of ordinary intelligibility or description, but mysterious. These figures have been unreasonably interpreted as intimating, in many passages, a divine purpose of suspending the common laws of nature, and of executing God's providential judgments by the intervention of miracle. One great objection to such interpretation consists in the obvious fact that *no distinction is afforded by the apocalyptic text itself between the things that are, in that case, miraculous, and the things that are simply figurative and ordinary*. All commentators, however, agree in considering this our present age as being far advanced in the pages and prodigies of the Apocalypse; and yet hitherto the world has witnessed nothing of a miraculous providence. Why, then, should we expect the remaining portions of the world's history to be necessarily accomplishable by miraculous prodigy? Surely it is but reasonable to conclude that the providence of God will be conducted uniformly; and that events yet future will be executed after the mode of the past:—in other words, that the Apocalypse is entirely and throughout figurative; and that it is an allegorical, or rather a hieroglyphical, narrative of natural events. The interpretation, therefore, of its figures must be governed by determinate rules, or by some *principle*, which only requires to be ascertained in order to furnish the key to their solution. On this supposition, a true key to the mysterious type is all that is wanting, or that should be sought, to enable us to read the Apocalypse as we should read any ordinary history or prediction. A key of such a nature is proposed in the following pages, which suggest a *principle* of interpretation and exemplify its *application*. And though I presume not that the key, though it be the true one, is incapable of misapplication, yet I indulge the confident hope that the nature of the solution proposed by me is 'correct. And though I myself may often be mistaken in my application of the rule to the minutiae of the various details of the prophetic history, yet will others be enabled, by aid of the very principle proposed, to correct the errors wherein I myself may have misapplied it.

There exists a very popular persuasion that the present age approaches closely to the Millennium. And since every one thus persuaded must acknowledge that eighteen hundred years of highly figurative predictions have hitherto passed without any *miraculous* providence, it seems strange that the prophetic history should suddenly require the interference of miracle most miraculous for the accomplishment of predictions not at all more figurative, as far as we can judge by the terms employed, than the former; predictions, too, immediately preceded and followed by events obviously of natural occurrence. Surely *consistency* requires the 19th and 20th chapters. (detailing the Millennium) to be interpreted conformably with preceding chapters; or else the Millennialist is bound to declare the principle that demands and justifies the change of his interpretation from figurative to literal.

Another obvious objection to the popular and literal interpretation of the Millennium, i. e. of the 19th and 20th chapters of the Apocalypse, presents itself in the following consideration. If the Lord Jesus is to make his personal appearance on earth during the Millennium, manifesting of course the visible glories of his divine presence, attended also by the literal persons of the risen martyrs, and reigning in person over the nations, and sitting literally on the temporal throne of David at Jerusalem or elsewhere, (which personal "coming and appearance," by the by, would indeed be a "second coming and appearance," but not *the* "second appearance without sin unto salvation" promised in Heb. 9, 28; and which second appearance and coming would render it absolutely necessary that he should "come and appear" a third time to final judgment): what is to become of him "*at the end of the thousand years,*" when "Satan is again to be let loose," and the hosts of Gog and Magog are "to surround the camp" (the comparatively *small* company) "of the saints?" Let candour say is such a conflict compatible with the visible presence of omnipotence and Christ's personal rule! Where, too, were these hosts of Gog and Magog during the preceding and *then past* Millennium? Were they living during all that time in obedience to Christ? and do they suddenly *become rebels*, manifesting an infatuated and incomprehensible

audaciousness of hostility against the literal presence of Deity? Surely these considerations, independently of many others, should suffice to stagger the Millennialist who would interpret the Apocalypse, either wholly or partially, according to the literal acceptance of the figures and terms employed in a prophetic history most obviously figurative.

SEC. II.—*On the Principles to be observed in the Interpretation of the Apocalypse.*

WHOEVER approaches the study of the Revelation must come prepared for such a solution of its mysterious terms as consists with the obvious nature of the composition. Its terms are not descriptive of *literal* events; but of *symbols* representing real events figuratively: they are a hieroglyphical history. Reason therefore demands that the book be interpreted, as reason would conclude it to have been written, consistently throughout: that the style of the whole is uniform; its materials and elements being all of one kind; its various parts conforming with the general nature and grammatical law of the whole. Symbol or emblem or figure must pervade and engross the piece: no single portion can form an exception, nor be allowed an exclusive privilege, or, rather, licence of literal interpretation: all must be interpreted uniformly, and therefore figuratively. It were unreasonable to suppose that the author had, in a single instance, marred his own plan, or deviated from the style voluntarily prescribed by himself for the law and language of his own observance. If he had, in any one part of his figurative composition, mixed up the style of ordinary or literal narrative, he would have added deliberate and unnecessary confusion to necessary obscurity and difficulty. He would have perplexed his simple plan of *instruction and concealment* by sometimes concealing instruction, and sometimes revealing concealment: thus casting a stumbling-block in his reader's path, which no caution, no principle could guard against, and which must ever tempt him with a most needless provocation to a *figurative and legitimate*, though in that case an erroneous interpretation.

For it is plain that both natural and miraculous incidents would be presented to the reader in one and the same garb : and how should the reader distinguish them ? It is therefore necessary that every portion of the book should be interpreted figuratively, and no portion of it literally ; except of course where the writer himself occasionally supplies the literal interpretation of the figure employed. And this very circumstance of the writer himself occasionally supplying the literal interpretation, becomes a significant argument of the figurativeness of all the rest. It is, as it were, the writer's reminder to the reader, that the narrative is a figurative one : it is cautionary of a mistake. Every representation, then, in the book must necessarily be a figure : *every* figure must have its proper signification and appropriate interpretation : and that interpretation must necessarily in every instance be other than the figure employed. This is but to render due credit to the authority of inspiration. Thus, "days" cannot mean *days* ; nor can "1260" mean 1260. "Days" might perhaps signify *years* : but "1260 days" cannot mean 1260 *years*,—if the spirit of figurative interpretation is strictly and consistently to be maintained. So also "half an hour" cannot literally mean (any more than it can reasonably be expected to apply to) any historial occurrence occupying that exact and brief period of time ; it may probably signify a very short, but indefinite period. Neither surely (for the same reasons) can "three days and a half" mean literally *three days and a half* ; nor yet *three years and a half* ; because "days" cannot mean *days*, nor "three and a half" *three and a half*. For the same reason consistently pursued, "a thousand years" cannot signify *a thousand years* ; because "years" cannot mean *years*, nor can "a thousand" mean *a thousand* ; they may signify (as Faber suggested) an indefinite long period.

The chief reason why the apocalyptic days are supposed to signify *historical years*, is—because such was the interpretation of the seventy weeks mentioned in Daniel. But the Millennialists themselves do not scruple to disregard this rule, in their interpretation of the Millennium : for if a prophetic *day* must needs signify an historical year, then "*a thousand years*," or *three hundred and sixty thousand days* must signify three hundred

and sixty thousand *years*: or else, the period of a *thousand years* is of shorter duration than *three and a-half years*, or forty and two months, or twelve hundred and sixty apocalyptic days or historical years. Will any one contend that "*half an hour*" or the forty-eighth part of a day, signifies an historical *week* or the forty-eighth part of an historical *year*? Can the short period of a *week*! be the term of an historical occurrence which may be supposed to constitute the duration of "*the silence in heaven for half an hour*?" Can any historical transaction of "three years and a half" fulfil the apocalyptic period of "*three and a half days*," during which the dead bodies of the witnesses lay exposed in the streets of the great city of Israel's bondage or spiritual Egypt? These objections are surely strong enough to justify a question whether the rule of an *historical year for each apocalyptic day* is the rule of interpreting the numbers and dates of the Apocalypse.

It is obvious also that many of the terms employed in the Apocalypse are, in the very strictest sense, symbolical and emblematical. Thus it is that *numbers, colours, and hieroglyphical creatures* are always employed as the mere mystical representation of *duration, quality and character*. Even when expressly applied to *time*, the signification of *numbers* is, I conceive, *always* figurative, and therefore arithmetical, and not purely numerical: that is, they are proportional and not literally chronical: as the reader will probably acknowledge when we arrive at the consideration of certain apocalyptic dates popularly held to signify specific periods. The number "seven" seems to be the symbol of peculiar mystery; and its exact moiety "three and a half" can scarcely be doubted to bear some mystical relation in the way of proportion to its dividend. And this consideration of its force, whether applied to years or to days, tends to shake the reputation of its *chronical* signification. The number "twelve" and its multiples (it being the number of greatest arithmetical excellence) have reference to *excellence, perfection, and completeness*: the number "four" to *universality*; in allusion to the four quarters of the world's compass. The number "three" seems obviously, in one place (chap. 16; 19) to represent spiritual division; and in another place (chap. 16; 13) *sacredness* of diabolical character.

This number "three" is never employed as the apocalyptic representation of truth or divine attribute : it is always used in a bad sense, or characteristic of evil. The number "ten" seems to have the *indefinite* and slightly figurative force of our *indefinite small number* "a dozen;" and consequently its moiety "five," is equivalent to our *indefinite* "half a dozen." The *double and square* of a number seem to be employed for the purpose of *increasing its power*: and *the half* of any number may therefore perhaps express *diminution of the power, or deficiency*.

Colours are obviously used emblematically : *white*, of holiness, truth, and victory : *red*, of strife, persecution, bloodshed, and cruelty : *black*, of disaster, desolation, and mourning : *pale*ness, (lividness) of death and destruction : *scarlet*, of empire.

Unless the student of the Revelation shall adopt some fixed rule or *principle*, to guide and restrict his interpretation, I cannot conceive that he has any chance of discovering the key to the mysterious characters and various delineations of the successive ages depicted in the book. Without such a check he will naturally yield to the suggestions of his religious prejudices ; prejudices, which the ingenuity of every commentator whose labours have fallen into my hands, has enabled him easily and confidently to favour, surmounting every obstacle of improbability and even of impossibility. The greater is a man's confidence in his sectarian persuasions and enthusiastic opinions, so much the greater is his danger of an arbitrary and licentious exercise of his judgment. Surely there *must* be a general propriety, conformability, and concord amongst the various figures employed as the language of such a composition as the Revelation. There must have been in the writer's mind a *specific* signification of *each and every* figure adopted by him as the creature of his own voluntary creation. To suppose otherwise would be derogatory to the claim of divine inspiration. A narrative divinely intended both for concealment and instruction *must* have been worded with the utmost precision of description. The hieroglyphical characters of an Egyptian obelisk were, doubtless, not adopted without a fixed signification, and conventional appropriateness of symbolical representation ; they would otherwise have been unintelligible to posterity or even to the next

generation. Can we reasonably suppose the Apocalypse to have been indited with less care to the security of its intelligibility? I submit, then, that THE INDISPENSABLENESS of *propriety and consistency* of figurative representation suggests the following data for general and strict observance in the interpretation of the Apocalypse.

THE SUN AND THE STARS represent kings, government, princes, nobles, and dignitaries; and, *consequently*, the higher regions of the firmament—"heaven," or "the heavens"—wherein these heavenly bodies are stationed, represent, (except when the term "heaven" refers to the prophet's own station in the vision) *the sphere of civil authority and privilege, or the higher and ruling DEPARTMENTS of civil and political society*. Again, as the "heavens" or *higher* regions of the firmament mean the higher departments of civil society, or the sphere of government, so, consequently, "THE AIR," or *lower* regions of the atmosphere, must represent *the subordinate departments of society, or the people* as distinguished from the privileged or politically elevated ranks and civil authorities. Again, consistently with this signification of "the heavens," and of "the air," we naturally come to the conclusion, that "thunders, lightnings, and hail," represent the providential judgments of almighty God affecting these estates of society with terrific conflicts of the political and civil atmosphere and elements. Again, as "the sea" must, and according to the prophet's own explanation, does represent THE WORLD, in a general or collective view of the nations, so "rivers," which flow into the sea, must mean *individual nations* which go to constitute the world at large, and "springs and fountains" must mean *the minor and component tribes*, municipalities, and constituent divisions of national associations, furnishing the civil and social, or municipal elements of national society. Again, as "the sea" and its agitations aptly represent the various and collective nations of *the world at large*, with their commotions and revolutions, so "the earth," standing opposed to the restless and turbulent ocean, must represent *the fixed or established state* of an empire, or of the nations in contradistinction to the commotions attendant on their political changes and revolutions. "The earth" may correctly, because naturally, be considered emble

mathematical also of another object. It may be viewed as standing opposed, not *to the sea*, but *to the heavens*; and thus it may aptly represent, not only *an empire*, but also *the basis of civil society*, or *the subordinate and lower ranks* of a whole empire or of the nations, in contradistinction to the ruling, legislative, and executive, or *higher departments* of civil society. Lastly, as "the earth" very aptly and obviously represents the settled or established condition of empires and kingdoms, so may we consistently, and therefore safely determine that "earth-quakes" designate *the subversion* of particular national or imperial establishments; such subversions, for instance, as overwhelmed and utterly terminated the *Jewish* kingdom and national establishment by the sword of the Romans, and the *Eastern* Roman empire by that of the Turks.

This mode of interpreting the apocalyptic terms "heaven" and "earth," and also all those terms bearing any relation to these elements, such as "the air, thunderings and lightnings, hail, the sun and stars, rivers, fountains, earthquakes," &c., this mode, I say, of interpreting the terms "heaven and earth" derives full corroboration from considering the *necessary* meaning of the terms and representations employed in the 21st chapter. The prophet there declares that he saw "*a new heaven and a new earth*;" and that "*the first heaven and the former earth were passed away, and there was no more sea*." Now, the apostle surely must, in this passage, have used the terms "the heaven, the earth, and the sea," in a sense conformable with his use of the same terms in the former pages of his composition. And if the apocalyptic term "heaven" signifies the celestial regions, or the metaphorical place of God's residence, according to its common and popular acceptance, I cannot conceive how it could be said that "*it had passed away*," nor in what significant and important sense is to be understood the declaration, "*and there was no more sea*." And yet necessity compels the acknowledgement that *something significant*, and something too of great importance, is intended. And what can possibly be intended, but that "*the heavens*" means the providential institution of civil governments, and that "*the sea*" means the fluctuating and agitated condition of *mankind*. or the conflicting nations of the world; and that

the celestial bodies, the sun and stars, and also every other object and natural phenomenon bearing a relation to these figurative and metaphorical elements, are to be interpreted with relative signification.

Of the various natural objects and phenomena adopted as the language or descriptive terms of the Apocalypse, it is to be peremptorily observed that either we must accept them literally, or else we must interpret them figuratively. If literally, then I appeal to the student's judgment, that consistency obliges him to accord *literality* to *every* term bearing a relation to "the heavens, the earth, the air, the sea," and the various elements of apocalyptic description. But if figuratively, then I appeal to his candour, that the same obligation of consistency compels him to accord a *figurative* interpretation to them all, without any other exception than what the prophet himself explains, or what absolute necessity demands. In short, the obvious sense of all these apocalyptic terms is opposed to their literal signification, and thus the student has to make his option between *the obviously figurative*, and *the unreasonably literal*. The very same propriety which constitutes a *grammatical* as well as a *religious* obligation to reject the doctrine of the *real* presence, asserted in the letter of the words "this is my body, and this is my blood," obliges the student of the Revelation to resist the weakness of temptation to a literal acceptance of the various representations of the apocalypse, and to renounce the popular prejudice of *the real presence* of Christ, and of the risen martyrs detailed in the 19th and 20th chapters describing a Millennium.

It is, moreover, a reasonable argument, that, as the very nature of symbolical or hieroglyphical composition constitutes an absolute prohibition to *the reader*, forbidding him to interpret any single representation in a literal sense; so most obviously must it necessarily have imposed on *the writer* an absolute prohibition to employ a literal or even an ordinarily figurative representation of any historical characters or incidents which admitted a possibility of being represented hieroglyphically. This is evidently the reason why the terms "antichrist," "man of sin," "the apostacy," &c., are never once adopted in the *Apocalypse*. It is undeniable that the epistles of Paul, Peter

and Jude to the various churches, and especially those of John himself, speak pointedly to the subject of the apostacy; connecting it with the specific characters of antichrist and the man of sin. Indeed, the epistles of the apostles are very commonly engrossed with this topic, which thus plainly demonstrates the exceeding importance of the subject (now indeed and long since disregarded and obsolete) viz. *the apostolic purity of the churches*, and their security from the principles of worldly policy, by strict adherence to the authority and institutions of the apostles as recorded in their writings, and which topics also constitute the theme of these apostles' solicitude and interest in the doctrines or future history of the church, and of the world. Most unreasonable therefore would it be to suppose that the burthen of the apocalyptic predictions had no reference to the important subject and characters conspicuous in the Epistles. Yet does not the Apocalypse *once* employ the term "antichrist," which figures as the engrossing religious and historical subject of Peter's, Jude's, Paul's, and John's own epistles; nor does it ever employ the term "man of sin," the important historical character foretold in the writings of Paul. Paul never employs the term "antichrist;" nor do John, Jude, or Peter ever employ the term "man of sin." Nevertheless, it cannot for a moment be doubted that the predictions of all these apostles alluded to one and the same important power. Nor can it be doubted that predictions so emphatically urged by the prophet Daniel, and so earnestly pressed by these apostles in their epistolary and oral addresses, (2 Thes. 2; 5—2 Pet 3; 15, 16—Jude, 17, 18) were the very same incidents more laboriously and circumstantially detailed in the Apocalypse. Indeed the non-employment of the term "antichrist" in the pages of the Apocalypse becomes thus a strong argument that *the Apocalypse is the genuine production of the apostle John's pen*. For, any person spuriously adopting the apostle John's name as a cover to his forgery, would assuredly have employed that prophetic term (antichrist) which was known to be prominent in his epistles.

It may be asked, why should the holy spirit have disguised in apocalyptic figures and symbols those historical truths which *doubtless* were detailed in undisguised terms in the oral addresses

of the apostles to the churches? In answer to this question, two very obvious reasons present themselves. One is, that common prudence dictated the propriety of not publishing in plain terms the destined calamities and downfall of the Roman Empire; and the other may be learnt by a reference to Luke 8; 9, 10.

I repeat, that without some competently restrictive rule or *principle*, to guide and chastise our interpretation of a hieroglyphical or figurative history, we can have no security against our prejudices and strong tendency to a licentious and arbitrary exercise of judgment; but each commentator may warp the Revelation into conformity with any historical character or favourite speculation, to which his religious prejudices may prompt him to apply them.

SEC. III.—*On the probable subjects of a prophetic revelation to the primitive Christians.*

PREPARATORILY to an attempt at interpreting a prophecy embracing obviously the utmost limits of terrestrial futurity, it may not be a useless task to consider what is *the kind* of incidents *likely* to have formed the subject of prospective interest in the mind of an apostle addressing *fellow-sufferers* in the cause of truth. From their Lord and Master the apostles and other disciples had already received assurances that the cause of truth should ultimately prevail, and the Messiah's kingdom be finally established; all its objects being gradually removed, and its successive opponents successively subdued. They had already received intimation, more or less clear—more or less obscure,—that though truth should ultimately prevail, yet its struggles should be protracted and its advocates persecuted *by various kinds* of enemies during many generations. They had learned that the Jews, as a privileged or favoured nation, should be rejected: the way of divine acceptance having been opened as free for Gentiles as for Jews. They had learnt that Jerusalem, for its multiplied transgressions and enormities, for its rejection of truth, and for its persecution of the advocates of truth, *should* be destroyed, and speedily too. That Paganism

should evince a similar hostility to the righteous cause, but that Paganism should similarly fall. That though *Paganism* should fall, yet the cause of truth should suffer equally and more protractedly from *Gentile* hostility cloaked by the name and profession of truth itself : and thus that a persecuting *apostacy* should long prevail in the world. That this *political* device also of the evil one had its fixed period of duration ; and that the day was appointed when it, in its turn, should decline and make way for the free progress of truth, and should finally and utterly perish, like the *two former political opponents* of the same invincible and victorious cause. That a day, moreover, was appointed when the evil one himself, who had originated every species of political opposition to the Messiah's truth and kingdom,—even the *three political hostilities* of the Jews, the pagan Gentiles, and spurious Christianity,—should be providentially restrained from all further *civil or political* hostility to the establishment of truth : and finally, that a day of judgment and restitution of all things was to come, when the sufferings of God's servants through all ages of their oppression should be amply recompensed ; and when the conqueror of death, who had already in his own person evinced his power over the grave, should destroy the evil one himself, and should make good his promise of redemption, blessedness, and immortality, by raising his servants also from the dead. That all mankind should stand at that day before the tribunal of God, whose truth, justice, and mercy shall be exhibited before the hosts of intelligence, in the everlasting destruction of the wicked and the everlasting life of the redeemed.

All these things had already been generally intimated to the disciples of Christ before the period of John's revelation. And it must be admitted, that in the intimation there was occasion not only for hope and joy, but also for apprehension and sadness. They were called on to sustain an arduous and painful conflict, having the encouragement of a very distant, though indeed great and certain deliverance and reward. And this very conflict and this very encouragement they had to transmit to successive generations, who were to take their place, and to fall or suffer in the ranks where others had fallen or suffered *before them*. Under these circumstances, it will be admitted

that faith itself required support : and the appropriate support was—a *prospective and distinct view of the appointed incidents through which the Church was to be conducted to the accomplishment of her hope.*

What so calculated to sustain the patience of fortitude, and the firmness of equanimity, as a clear foresight of the course and period of suffering to be endured,—a conviction of the necessity and reasonableness of endurance,—and a good hope that such endurance tends certainly to a felicitous issue? Such a view or outline of the Church's destinies would appear to be a very natural and even necessary subject of prophecy. Their importance seems (as far as the human mind may presume to estimate the mind of God) to be of magnitude sufficient to merit a divine communication. To my mind it does not appear likely that political occurrences, having no obvious relation to the cause of truth (however great and reasonable may be their importance in the estimation of the *civil* historian) possess interest or importance enough to be made the matter of special revelation to the Church, in a narrative regarding solely *her interests* in the condensed incidents of time to its very termination. Can we then imagine that *the successions of the different families of the Cæsars to the imperial throne* were of adequate importance to constitute a necessity of special revelation or divine prediction? Yet commentators have commonly made these insignificant circumstances to be the burthen of three of the four first seals, and even of four out of the seven seals that comprise the whole mystery of God's providence to the end of all things. Nothing, surely, but an overweening and puerile regard of classical history could have magnified into such preposterous importance and artificial interest the frivolous incidents of history. The condensed view of the world presented to us in the Apocalypso will not permit us to think with many of the commentators that even a famine occurring in the reign of a Roman emperor can be the solution of the third seal. A famine occurring in the days of the emperor Claudius was not of more importance to posterity than any of the many famines of subsequent occurrence. And though a famine at that day may have been sufficiently important to be communicated by revelation to the disciples of that generation,

yet surely it was not an appropriate subject of revelation to future ages. Neither Attila, nor Alaric, nor Genseric, nor Bonapart himself, is big enough to be individualized in the reduced scale of the world's history in the Revelations. As well might we expect a telescope to exhibit some victor scaling one of the mountains of the moon. As well almost might we expect, as one expositor (an Hibernian, of course,) has suggested,—that the city of *Armagh* is to be the site of the great battle of *Armageddon*! Doubtless, the Cæsars, and all other historical characters, contribute respectively their portion, together with that of the humblest individual in the cause of error, to the fulfilment of God's revealed purposes. But none of them seem to have been so personally influential over the habits, sentiments, and history of mankind as to constitute any one of them the individual and exact antitype of any single apocalyptic personage. *They* did not produce the eras of their own and of succeeding generations; but the eras in which they were born developed the sentiments and transactions of the day, and produced *them*, the agents and spokesmen of mankind, and the instruments of God's providences. The mightiest geniuses who have headed the various revolutions of the human mind and mankind's advancement in morals, sentiments, arts, sciences, and politics, have but preceded by a few years the dense march of the many; and so, at most, have only hastened, as it were, the slow but certain progress of providential purpose. The talents and ambition of Cæsar abridged not Rome's commonwealth of one day of its full period: for if Julius had never existed, the times were productive of many Cæsars. In the same manner, the Popes of Rome did but step into a vacant spiritual throne, which the sentiments of mankind had already erected; neither would their reign have been sensibly protracted, though Luther himself had worn the tiara. It is morally impossible that Mahomet should have prevailed in Asia, if the previous religion and moral vitality of the Asiatic Christians had not become an inanimate and corrupt carcase, ready to glut the birds of prey that hover over the devoted victims of pitiless voracity. For it is physiologically impossible *that Mahomet should have begotten his device, if the sperm of* *th* *on* impregnated by him had not been previously

generated : and if the genius, passions, and national predicaments both of his own countrymen and of the other Asiatic nations had not suggested to him the conquest of the east and the policy and doctrines of the Koran. The idolatrous corruption of Christianity obviously suggested the Mahometan maxim, "There is but one God." Had Mahomet died in his cradle, the season and soil of Asia, on which he fell, would have furnished a variety of the same indigenous species. The imposture would indeed have differed in name, and perhaps in national peculiarities, (though the Turks, who superseded the Saracens, had little occasion to modify the system) but not in *the essentials* of its nature.

Therefore in the apocalyptic narrative of *European* destinies, "*the false prophet*" cannot signify a *literal* false prophet or *individual* impostor ; nor yet a *succession of individuals* ; he *may* personate the agency of *some prevailing class* influential over the minds and actions of European mankind. Even "the man of sin," mentioned by the Apostle Paul, cannot, I conceive, mean any individual man or succession of individuals ; but some general political establishment supporting the pretensions of a spiritual and civil tyranny exercised over men's persons and consciences, and founded in a Satanic opposition to truth. Even Mahomet himself is not, I conceive, honoured by any personal notification whatever in the Apocalypse ; but is merely involved in "the smoke" (see hereafter the fifth Trumpet) of the superstition which bears his name in history. At the time of Mahomet, the circumstances of the Asiatic nations and their Christianity were such, that we might well ask "*was faith to be found on the eastern earth ?*" Mahomet, therefore, (nor indeed any other *individual*) cannot be the real person designated by any one of the characters delineated in the book. The consideration, however, of this subject would be premature in this place, except as an exemplification of the caution requisite in guarding against a rash application of comprehensive predictions to individual persons or their successors.

I cannot however refrain from an observation suggested by *the concurrency of the rise of the two impostures* (the Mahometan and the Papal) in the East and in the West. This concurrency

has induced some to doubt whether "*Antichrist*" be not the manifestation of the Mahometan rather than, or at least as well as, of the Papal tyranny. It is obvious, indeed, that the condition of Christianity at that time both in Europe and in Asia was such as favoured some great change of national policy and popular persuasion in both regions. Such was the universal deterioration and degradation of the human mind under the besotting influence of corrupt Christianity, that mankind was everywhere prepared for spiritual slavery. Thus the moral and religious state both of Europe and of Asia invited their respective impostures and tyrannies. But whoever considers the *scriptural* indications of Antichrist, cannot fail to acknowledge that Antichrist, whoever he be, must necessarily *profess the name* of Christ; and therefore that Mahometanism does not furnish the peculiar requisite of that prophetic personage. Antichrist was to have *the form* but not *the substance* of godliness.

SEC. IV.—Chapter IV. of the Book of Revelation.

SETTING aside for the present the *three first* chapters of the Apocalypse, which will briefly occupy our attention at a future page, and which are manifestly unconnected with the main body of the narrative,—the revelation opens with an emblematical representation of the Christian Deity or the attributes of the Godhead,—glorious in sovereignty and faithfulness,—awful in providential judgment,—excellent, holy, and righteous in counsel,—omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent,—acknowledged by created intelligence monarch of all dominion, dispenser of all good, perfection of all mind, and irresponsible executor of all operation. The four and twenty elders clothed in white, and having on their heads golden crowns, are, I presume, a mystical representation of the redeemed: the number "twenty-four," as a multiple of the perfect number "twelve," being probably a representation of *perfection*. The four beasts (or, rather, living creatures) represent, I apprehend, the sovereign attributes of God, whose throne is therefore declared to be surrounded by *them*. For moved by the contemplation of these divine at-

tributes, or (as it is apocalyptically or figuratively expressed) urged by the suggestion of the four living creatures, the twenty-four elders are represented in the next chapter to have harps and golden vials full of odours, which are explained to be the prayers of the saints: and they all fall down before the Lamb, and say—"thou hast redeemed *us* by thy blood out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; and has made us kings and priests to God: and we shall reign on the earth." Thus, and *only* thus, viewed, the church of Christ, unlike the Jewish church, was indeed *universal* or catholic.

SEC. V.—Chapter V. of the Book of Revelation.

JOHN saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne, a book sealed with seven seals. This book represents, of course, the mysterious purposes of the veracious, unchangeable, and almighty God, respecting the destinies of his church and her opponents: the number "seven" having here as elsewhere throughout the book, some reference to divine and to diabolical *mystery*.

Numerical terms, such as 2, 3, 4, 7, 10—and *arithmetical* proportions, such as $3\frac{1}{2}$ (the moiety of 7)—5 (the half of 10)—12 (the most perfect number)—24,—100,—144,—1000 (the multiplies of certain elementary numbers) were ever in figurative and mystical use among men, and especially perhaps among eastern nations; as *geometrical* figures, such as the circle, triangle, and square, were among the Egyptians and Greeks. Men were first led (we may conceive) to adopt these devices as the least gross analogies in nature, whereto the mind can resort in aid of its attempt to image the metaphysical qualities of excellence, the attributes of perfection, the powers of moral influence, and the invisible things of the spiritual world. Nor does it appear from scripture and its representation of the Cherubims, that—as mere symbols of the divine attributes, and not as likenesses of the divine person—they were an unlawful expression of human conceptions of divine things; nor that, as such mere expressions of metaphysical attributes, they were more obnoxious to a charge

of idolatry than are men's verbal expressions or even their ideas of the divine attributes ; for men do not worship God's attributes, but God. To this conventional usage of ideal analogies must the apocalyptic numbers be referred ; and from this their mystical reputation must, as I conceive, the real import of *all* the apocalyptic numbers be gathered. I mean to say, that all the numbers employed in the book must be interpreted symbolically or figuratively, and cannot with grammatical legality be understood literally. For, symbol, emblem, and figure are the descriptive characters and language exclusively proper to, and therefore exclusively employed in the apocalyptic writing ; just as they were necessarily the sole characters employed in hieroglyphical writing, or the sacred records of many ancient nations. The number "seven," then, of the seals, trumpets, and vials, as also of many other objects described in the book, is not (I conceive) in any single instance to be interpreted as having the definite meaning of *chronicle* ; and by no means determines the seven seals to the literal representation of so many distinct periods or successive divisions of time. Commentators, I conceive, have been led astray by a pre-conception that the seven seals circumstantially correspond to seven distinct periods. The fifth seal palpably represents no period ; and can be made to represent one only by constraint. But, indeed, the *three* first seals represent no distinct period or chronological series of events. The *fourth* and *seventh* are the only seals detailing strictly a succession of *historical* incidents marking plainly the progress of time. All the seals do indeed unfold their respective contents with a propriety of *natural order* ; but *all* have not the character of *annals*. The *fourth* seal details the desolating contest between the Jews and the Romans : the *sixth* records the extinction of the Mosaic dispensation, which is not a matter of pure history ; though the circumstances attending it, such as the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple, and the dissolution of the Jewish state (which calamities are chiefly the subject of the *fourth* seal) are incidents purely historical. Yet, the Temple and city had once before been destroyed *without the extinction of the Mosaic or national dispensation*, and consequently the extinction of the *Mosaic dispensation* at the time of the Roman desolation of the

state is not a matter of historical record : it is a matter only of revelation. The *seventh* seal (which includes both the seven *trumpets* and the seven *vials*) records the decline and fall, or the destruction of the Roman empire ; that is, of its *eastern* department in the *trumpets*, and of its *western* department in the *vials* ; which *western* department is the seat of the man of sin or of tyrannizing antichrist. Then follows the Millennium. Thus the *fourth* and *seventh* seals comprise the whole period of time between the apostles' days and the Millennium ; for, the seventh seal comprehends the seven trumpets ; and the seventh trumpet comprehends the seven vials. Indeed the seventh seal carries on the history of the world to its end, or to the period of the institution of a new order of things, and of a new condition of human nature. And I am much mistaken if this view of the chronology of the apocalypse does not considerably simplify the whole narrative, and remove a great part of the obscurity in which the subject has been involved by the mistake of commentators, who have invariably sought for specific historical incidents, rather than for general characteristics of national deterioration, as the fulfilment of each of the *seven parts* of each of the *triple series* of seals, trumpets, and vials. I conclude then (and I think the sequel will satisfactorily show it) that the seven seals have no distinct reference to any corresponding number of periods ; but that the four first seals (like the four first trumpets and the four first vials) represent the mysteriousness and determination of God's purposes with reference to the Church, in his providential appointments of all worldly affairs,—or those moral, social, civil, and political causes or deteriorating conditions of national society, which led, by natural necessity and national degeneracy, to the development of God's purposes, or the downfall and destruction of the three several powers concerned as the subjects of the triple series of divine judgment. The seven eyes and seven horns of the Lamb are also mystical representations of the knowledge and power which identify with deity the human agent of divine grace and human salvation. To whom, therefore, with him who sits on the throne, all created intelligence ascribe power, riches, wisdom, strength, glory, and blessing for ever and ever. To the Lamb alone then belongs the

privilege of opening the book : that is, the Son of God, or rather *Jesus Christ* alone (not in his capacity as *Man*, i. e. of *the Son*, but viewed as *the Godhead, even the father himself*) has the power of foretelling things to come. For, it must not be forgotten that Christ himself, when foretelling these very events, declares that "of that hour knoweth not even the Son, but the Father." This brings us to the sixth chapter, which begins with the opening of the first seal.

SEC. VI.—Chapter VI. of the Book of Revelation.

LET it be borne in mind, that the Revelation displays *seven* seals, *seven* trumpets and *seven* vials. Again : the seventh *seal* contains the seven *trumpets*, and the seventh *trumpet* contains the seven *vials*. Therefore the *six* first seals constitute the first series of God's judgments upon the first *political* opponent of Messiah's kingdom : the *six* first trumpets constitute the second series of the divine judgments upon the second *political* opponent ; and the third series extends through the *seven* vials of God's judgments of the third and last *political* opponent of Christ's *spiritual* kingdom. Again : it is particularly notable that the last of each of the three series contains an earthquake, the natural representation of *subversion*. Finally, it will, I think, be very obvious that *the seals* relate to the Jewish political establishment, the first *political* power that opposed the establishment of Messiah's *spiritual* kingdom, the church of Christ. *The trumpets* relate—first to the pagan ascendancy of the persecuting and *whole* Roman empire both in the east and in the west ; and (after the demission of paganism and the accompanying division of the empire by the successors of Constantine) to the empire in its *eastern* department. *The vials* relate to the superstition and tyranny which succeeded to the fall of paganism and of imperial Rome in the *western* department of the empire ; or, in other words, the vials are God's providential judgments falling on the the man of sin or tyrannizing antichrist, that is, on the various *western* establishments of *political and spurious Christianity*.

Thus the scheme of the Revelation may be generally and

briefly given as follows. The seals, trumpets, and vials are the divine and providential judgments falling successively and respectively upon the three successive political powers which successively and persecutingly opposed the spiritual establishment of divine truth and God's servants, or Messiah's kingdom. The overthrow of the last of these three series conducts the church of Christ to that period of its earthly prosperity which is obtained for it by God's providences in a deliverance from Satanic opposition manifested in political hostility and civil persecution. This state of the church's temporal prosperity or exemption from political and civil persecution and oppression occupies a comparatively very long period, designated by the term "a thousand years:" after which indefinite period of peace, the tranquillity and temporal prosperity of the church are again to be disturbed by the malice of Satan, for a comparatively short period; short, I conceive, only in comparison with the long preceding period of peace. A universal opposition of the nations is then to assail the disciples of Christ; which is to terminate by a final display of God's power ushering in the end of all things, the judgment day, and that change of the condition of human nature which is to succeed to a resurrection from the dead to final judgment.

With a further view to the student's clear perception of the apocalyptic scheme, it is important that he should note the following fact; which, though susceptible of *absolute demonstration*, is yet, at first sight, somewhat obscure. It appears to have been the prophet's purpose to divide his prophecy (beginning at the fourth chapter) into *two parts*: in such a manner, however, that *each* part should contain a specific subject or portion of history; and yet that *each* should contain an entire exhibition and unbroken recital, of the progress of truth *from the very publication of the gospel of Christ, to its triumph over all its opponents*. Each part, however, as I have said, has a distinct object. The first part, containing *the seals and the trumpets*, describes at large the cause of truth in its contest with *avowed*, i. e. with *Jewish and Gentile*, adversaries; a brief summary of *subsequent events* (that is, of the reign and judgments of its masked enemies, or of *spurious and tyrannizing Christianity or Antichrist*) being added

to the latter end of this portion of the prophetic history, in the form of "*a little book*," an appendix (as the word implies) containing the report of *seven thunders* expressly declared to be synonymous with the seventh trumpet, i. e. with the seven vials (chap. 10: 7) and completing the history forwards down to the Millennium. This division or *first* part of the prophecy ends at the conclusion of the *tenth* chapter, which terminates with a verse plainly showing that the subject is finished, or the prophecy complete. The second division, containing the seventh trumpet or the seven vials, describes *at large* what had been *summarily and very obscurely* rehearsed, or rather alluded to, *at the conclusion of the first division* in the report of the seven thunders; viz. the cause of truth in its contest with *masked* enemies, or *spurious* Christianity, or *reigning and tyrannizing Antichrist*, even to the terminating period of its reign, i. e. to the period of the Millennium: a brief summary of prior events (that is, of the origin and propagation of Christianity among the Gentiles, and the deposition of paganism from imperial sway and *political ascendancy*) being affixed *at the commencement* of this second division of the prophecy, completing the history backwards from the rise of *spurious Christianity invested with civil power*, up to the earliest days of the promulgation of truth and the gospel among the *Gentiles*. This division of the book *begins* with the eleventh chapter. The nineteenth chapter terminates the history of the *reign* of antichrist, or of the Man of Sin, or the *apostacy foretold by the Apostles*. The remainder of this second portion of the book relates to the Millennium and to political and worldly events subsequent to the Millennium.

The seven thunders are the entire substance of a *little book* or appendix to the first division of the prophecy; and follow *immediately after* the sixth or last trumpet, or the *terminal* judgment of the *Eastern* Roman empire. They *must* therefore be concluded to take up the history of the Church, or, rather, of the oppressors of the Church, upon the occasion of the *next* political and persecuting power that should present itself to the pen of the prophetic historian: in other words, it is the history of *tyrannizing Antichrist*. The Apostle being commanded to eat this *little book*, found it sweet in his mouth, but bitter in his belly.

Whereby is signified, that though a foretaste of the Church's deliverance from the cruel tyranny of *Paganism* was a subject of joy,—yet was the reflection bitter, that she had still to suffer many ages of *Antichrist's* persecution. The Apostle was about to write the things which the thunders detailed (a plain proof that “time” was yet replete with historical incidents) but was forbidden to write them, with a most solemn assurance from the Eternal, that the events reported in the thunders should afterwards be fully detailed in the transactions of the *seventh* trumpet (that is, in the seven vials) wherein the judgment of God would be effectually visited on the oppressors of his people; and the mystery of God would be finished.* Hence I am justified in saying that the seven thunders may be *incontestably proved* to be synonymous with the seven vials. The little book, or appendix to the preceding chapters, is added (I repeat) for the purpose of completing the first of the two parts into which the Revelations are divided; and of bringing that portion of it, which had represented the cause of truth in her contest with Jewish and Gentile enemies, down to the concluding period of her triumph over an apostate and persecuting superstition. And it (the tenth chapter) terminates with a verse plainly showing that the subject is finished, and the prophecy concluded. And since all the events contained

* An unfortunate error in the translation (for, an error it *must* be) has served to perplex the interpretation of the sixth verse of the tenth chapter. In that verse the Angel swears by the eternal God (i. e. he utters a promise to the suffering Church, confirmed by an oath,) “ὅτι χρόνος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι” that is, if translated literally, “that (the) time” (when the seven thunders are to occur) “shall not be yet,” or (according to the prophet's own immediate explanation) that the incidents of the seven thunders shall occur “when the seventh trumpet shall sound; when the mystery of God shall be finished.” Now, since the seventh trumpet is occupied in the seven vials, it is plain that the Angel really swears that the seven thunders shall receive their accomplishment in,—or, are synonymous with,—the seven vials. Unfortunately the absence of the Greek definite article has induced the translators, regardless of the imperative necessities of the context, and regardless also of the acknowledged equivocalness either of the employment or of the omission of that article) to render the Greek passage just quoted, by “that time shall be no longer,” instead of “that the time shall not be yet.” The authorized version of the passage, viz. “that time shall be no longer” (instead of “that time shall not be yet,” or “that the time shall not be yet”) confounds the student by suggesting some incomprehensible notion that the thunders are the end of the world: while in palpable contradiction of this notion, the subsequent chapters detail events of a very long subsequent period of “time.”—If the authorized version be the correct one, then the declaration must mean that the thunders carry on time to its termination.

or, rather, concealed in the little book, and uttered by the seven thunders, were to be set forth at large in the seventh trumpet, that is, in the *seven vials*, or *the subsequent division* of the prophecy (chap. 10: 7); it was obviously natural and proper to *suppress* its contents at that stage of the narrative; and therefore there existed no necessity for the prophet's detailing, in the tenth chapter, the *subsequent* development of "*time*" or the events communicated to him, and about to have been transcribed by him, from the reports of *the seven thunders*.

There is however, *perhaps*, another and collateral reason for the introduction and suppression of *the thunders*, in the prophetic detail of *Eastern* history. The scene of *the vials* is laid in, and confined to, *Western Europe*; because *that region* was the locality of the *chief or greatest* manifestation of Antichrist's tyranny. Nevertheless, the rest of the christian world was by no means exempt from similar or parallel oppressions. Now, we cannot suppose that *the West* of Europe *engrossed* all the evil perpetrated by spurious and tyrannical christianity; nor that *Eastern* Europe, Asia, and Africa were never more to furnish during the ages that *succeeded* the termination of *the trumpets* or the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks, disciples of Christ as true and faithful as does *Western* Europe. As therefore the destinies of *the west* are those which *the vials* detail; so also, *perhaps* the parallel or similar destinies of *the east* are to be understood in *the thunders*. This, however, is not the view that commands my own assent. The thunders are synonymous with the vials.

If, then, *the sixth seal* fixes (as I have proposed, and as, I think I shall satisfactorily prove) the termination of the Mosaic dispensation; determining it to have been an immediate consequence upon the destruction of the Jewish polity by the Romans; and if *the seventh seal* (i. e. the trumpets and vials) contains similar judgments upon the two other *great political enemies of Messiah's kingdom*, viz. the ancient Roman empire *eventually limited* to the East,—and the modern Roman empire of the West, or spurious christianity invested with civil power;—it remains for us to assign a natural interpretation to the five preceding seals. *Such natural* solution is supplied by Jewish and by no other *history*.

If any believing man should, even at the present day, essay to write a history of God's providential judgments for the last past eighteen hundred years,—he would naturally preface his narrative with such remarks as the following. He would say that—"God, having from the beginning of the world purposed "and promised to reveal his truth to men, had accordingly at his "own appointed time fulfilled his purpose and promise by Jesus "Christ ; whom he charged with a commission of grace to the "Jewish people, by them to be communicated to the rest of "the world. That this truth or revelation of the Godhead in "the man Jesus Christ, being opposed to the persuasions of "mankind, to their prejudices and their passions, was calculated "to excite their natural indignation and hostility. That hence "the Jews *first*, and *afterwards* the Gentiles, had engaged in a "cruel and exterminating persecution of all those who received "and confessed the revelation. That God, in the exercise of "retributive justice, was pleased to dispense his providential "and righteous judgments ; rendering indignation and wrath "to *all* the malignant opponents of his truth ; tribulation and "anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil *of the Jew first*, "*and afterwards of the Gentile*. And that after due forbearance "towards each description of his enemies, he at length, in "compassion to his persecuted servants, and in compliance with "their prayers for deliverance, commenced against each opponent respectively, the work which avenges, and will finally "establish the cause in which they suffer ; subduing all opposition, and successively overthrowing each power that exalts "itself against his most holy will and purpose." Such, I say, would be the natural preface to a history purporting to be a record of God's providential judgments upon those various portions of mankind which happened to encounter truth, and which engaged in a contest with that specific power, which was and is destined "to put all enemies under its feet." And such, if I mistake not, is the *emblematical preface* of the Apocalyptic history of God's dealings with the hostile Jews, as that hostility and those dealings are represented in the *five first seals*: for, the seals are the judgments of God upon the first of the three great political

establishments that have opposed themselves to the truth of God, and to the *spiritual* kingdom of his Christ.

SEC. VII.—*The Seven Seals.*

FIRST SEAL.

The first seal opens with a representation of the truth or word of God: "one sitting on a *white* horse, with a bow in his hand, going forth conquering, and to conquer." The same personage is, with obvious propriety, introduced again on the eve of the great and final victory of the truth over *the last* of its *three great political opponents and oppressors*, recorded in the nineteenth chapter; and is there expressly declared to be "the word of God." The emblem of the white horse and his rider brings to mind that descriptive passage of sacred writ, which represents "the word of God" in the very character of *the rider upon the white horse* of the first seal. Nor is it credible that the prophet should not have particularly held in view the Psalmist's representation of the victorious Messiah. "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O mighty one, with thy glory and majesty: and in thy majesty ride prosperously in the cause of truth, and meekness, and righteousness: and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies, whereby the people fall under thee."

SECOND SEAL

But calculated, as *the truth of God* is, to provoke the fiercest resistance and the most malignant hatred of the world, or of the natural mind which is blind and insensible to it—we cannot be surprised that its publication and propagation were the signals for a fierce and bigoted opposition, and for the most cruel persecutions of its advocates and adherents; which drew down upon the resisting nation, to whom it was first addressed, God's providential judgments of civil and national catastrophe. We are therefore prepared to expect and understand the next or *second seal*, which is an emblematical representation of *contention and*

bloodshed figured by a red horse: the colour "red" being the natural emblem of contention and bloodshed, just as the colour of the *white* horse was the natural emblem of victory, truth and holiness. "And it was given to him who sat thereon to *take peace from the earth*, that men should kill one another: and "there was given to him a great sword." The Lord Jesus had ever warned his disciples not to indulge a fallacious expectation of tranquility under the profession and publication of its truth, "Think you," says he, "that I am come to send peace upon earth? I tell you nay, but rather *division and the sword*." Accordingly the lives of the Jewish disciples, like that of their master, were in continual jeopardy. Now; since a considerable time elapsed before *the acceptability of Gentiles* into the favour of God, and the communion of disciples through faith in Jesus Christ, were made known to the Church,—it is plain that the only sufferers in the cause of truth must, for a long time, have been *Jewish*; and *the only persecutors* must have been *the Jews*, because *the Pagans* were not, at that early day, even addressed by the preachers of the gospel. We might, therefore, reasonably expect to hear that the judgments of God, denounced against all opponents of his truth, fell first on Jerusalem and the land of Judea. Already had the Lord Jesus predicted to the Jews, that "the measure of their father's iniquities should "be filled up by their sons *then living*: and that upon *them* should "fall the judgment of all the righteous blood shed upon the "earth, from the days of the first murderer of the first righteous "or believing man born into the world, to that hour: verily it "it should be required *of that generation*." We are therefore prepared for the information that the cruelties of the Jewish nation to the Lord Jesus and his disciples were promptly followed by the providential judgments of God denounced against their national disobedience, unbelief, and persecuting enmity. Accordingly, the avenger whom the providence of God had summoned as the instrument of his righteous judgment, was at hand; and the human agent came at the divine call. The Romans had recently annexed all Syria and Palestine to their empire. And God, who rules the affairs of all nations, and moulds their ambitious policies to his own providential pr-

poses, put it into the hearts of the infatuated Jews to rebel at this peculiar juncture against their masters. The Jews were unable to maintain a successful contest against the iron power of their incensed enemies ; and after the most grievous sufferings of a protracted siege, were utterly broken, and the nation was expatriated. During all this period of national calamity, the disciples of Christ had to sustain the double weight of persecution and war. Yet their master had instructed them in the general policy of retreating before the extreme malice of their own countrymen, and had also taught them to evade the blow that should destroy their nation, by a timely flight to the mountains, at the approach of the Roman armies.*

Previously, then, to the desolating
THIRD SEAL. judgments announced in the Fourth

Seal, a special providence watching over the servants of God is exhibited in the Third Seal, which cautions the angelic agent of affliction to respect the righteous, in an emblematical charge declaring "that the wheat and the barley were to be estimated, during the impending execution of God's general judgment upon the Jewish nation, at their just equivalent ; that the olive and the vine were sacred ;" and, consequently, that the divine commission of fiery devastation was to be executed only upon the dead, "wood, hay, stubble, and chaff." Accordingly, we may reasonably presume that when the land of Judea was delivered to the devastation of the invading Romans, and to the slaughter of the besieged multitudes in Jerusalem, they who believed the memorable warning of the Lord Jesus (and none, of course, believed it but disciples) had been taught to profit by the intimation. The calamities intimated in this the Third Seal to be in progress of visitation upon the Jewish people, are emblematically characterised by a Black Horse ; black being the emblem of affliction and mourning.

* In order to escape the persecutions of their own countrymen, the disciples of Christ had been counselled, "When they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another." And in order to avoid the national calamities of Roman destruction, they were instructed,—“When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof draweth nigh: then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains,” &c.

The Fourth Seal is now opened:
FOURTH SEAL. “and Jerusalem being encompassed

with armies which closed her in on every side, the desolation thereof drew nigh.” The infatuated nation which had not known the day of the visitation of grace, knew not now the day of the visitation of vengeance: but, persisting in a vain opposition to the incensed and irresistible Romans, the land was traversed by the Pale Horse, (pale, or livid; ἵππος χλωρός; the proper emblem, as it is the natural colour, of death) bearing “the angel of death, and followed close by hell.” That is, Judea was devastated: Jerusalem was closely besieged and subjected to the most unprecedented sufferings and horrors; and the hour was at hand when the Jewish polity, already virtually extinct, was about formally to be abolished, by the destruction of the city and the temple, the expatriation of the whole nation, and the subversion of the Jewish establishment. These all being complete and permanent, the divine purpose was clearly manifested that now should terminate *the Mosaic dispensation, and the kingdom of the Messiah be established in its stead.* This was the “marriage-supper” to which the Jews had been invited; but when they refused the invitation, “*the doors were shut*” upon the Jews, *viewed as Jews or as a privileged nation.*

Now, therefore, the cause of truth
FIFTH SEAL. was to be divinely avenged of its enemies: or, in the emblematical

language of prophecy, the Fifth Seal was opened, and the cries of the oppressed were to prevail. We are taught by the reply to their complaint, that the forbearance of God commonly defers to hurl prompt vengeance at his enemies, with a view to the accomplishment of purposes which at the moment of delay we cannot clearly appreciate. The will of God had ordained that the malice of his enemies should add to the host of their victims a certain number of extreme sufferers, in a cause wherein all who took part in it were to suffer. Till this

number were fulfilled, the subversion of the Jewish persecuting power was deferred.

The Lord Jesus had already taught
SIXTH and LAST that "*immediately after the tribulation*"
SEAL. attendant on the devastation of Judea

and the siege of Jerusalem, "the sun should be darkened, and the moon should not give her light, and the stars should fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens should be shaken: and then should be seen *the sign* of the Son of Man in heaven; and then should all the tribes of the earth mourn, when they should see *the sign* of the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he should send his angels with the sound of a great trumpet; and they should gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Verily (said he) I say unto you, *this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.*"—Matt. 24. The concluding verse of this paragraph shows plainly that they who interpret these the Lord's predictions as relating to the end of *the world*, or to any other event than the subversion of the Jewish establishment, and the extinction of the Mosaic dispensation, and the establishment of Christ's kingdom amongst the Gentiles (seeing that there occurred not during that generation any other great changes or transactions that can by possibility be made to apply to the terms of the Lord's predictions) are mistaken. Indeed those persons who picture to their minds the *literal* appearance and *personal* coming of Christ "in the clouds," forget *the letter* of the pointed expression in the text, viz., "then shall they see," not *the Son of Man* in person,—but "*the sign* of the Son of Man coming in the clouds, &c." Now, *the sign* of a thing is not *the thing itself*. Such persons are deceived also by the very prevalent disposition of taking in a literal sense the common language of metaphor and prophetic figure. Very similar figures (as Newton observes) are employed in scripture to describe the destruction of Egypt by the king of Babylon, and yet no one feels any difficulty in *making* any proper application of them. "I will cover the

heavens" (says Ezekiel, alluding to the judgments of Egypt, chap. 32, v. 7,) and make the stars thereof dark : I will cover the sun with a cloud ; and the moon shall not give her light." The extinction of a civil and religious establishment is very aptly figured by the extinction of the lights of heaven, and by the falling of the stars. When an inspired writer, alluding to the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, says—"The waters stood up on a heap : they were a wall on either hand,"—is it an infidel persuasion, that the sacred poet by no means intended a *literal* assertion ? The man *who verily believes that the prophet Jonah was verily swallowed by a sea-monster, and was safely disgorged again upon the shore*, can afford to disregard the imputation of infidelity for interpreting figuratively the highly-wrought representations of divine judgment and national ruin. Therefore, the prediction of the Lord Jesus, when translated into common language, means literally and only that, "led on by the *providentially indicated* presence of Christ, whose almighty power orders the destinies of all nations, the Roman armies should speedily avenge upon the Jews their rejection and crucifixion of their king, and should execute righteous vengeance by destroying their national establishment : God thus putting a termination to the Mosaic dispensation by a final renunciation of his elect people the Jews : and that this event should make room for the establishment of the new and glorious *spiritual* dispensation of *Christ's kingdom*, in which should be assembled *another elect people* gathered together, not from amongst the Jews exclusively, nor even preferably, but from amongst *every nation under heaven* ("from the four winds of heaven") whom God, *by the proclamation of the gospel* ("the sound of a great trumpet") and *by the apostolic heraldry* ("ἄγγελος," angel or messenger) should call. This prediction of the Lord fully explains the Sixth Seal, upon the opening of which "there was "a great earthquake : and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair ; and the moon became as blood ; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a figtree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heavens departed as a scroll, when it is rolled together ; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the

“kings of the earth, and great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and mighty men; and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains—fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for, the day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” The earthquake here mentioned is obviously an emblematical representation of *the subversion* of the Jewish state. The darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars, are (according to the principles formerly laid down for the control of my interpretation) the extinction of the Jewish government and *civil ordinances*, as also the abolition of those *typical sacrifices and ceremonial ordinances of national worship* which, like the light of the moon, *reflected the glories of future day*, and were aptly represented by the feebler lustre of the orb of night. These representations are almost a literal transcript of the Lord’s own predictions above quoted, *which were to be fulfilled during that very generation*. The departure of the heavens like a scroll is a sublime and most apt emblem of the abolition of *the Mosaic dispensation*, connected as it was with the civil establishment of the Jews. And the terrors and confusion of all ranks (“men’s hearts failing them for fear”) from the very highest to the very lowest individuals in society, expressed by their “hiding in dens, and calling to the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb”; are lively expressions of popular and wild despair, and of the dissolution of civil society. They are, moreover, *a literal transcript of the Lord’s own words* as he was being led away to crucifixion, and as he addressed the weeping train of his followers:—“daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep *for yourselves and for your children* : for, behold *the days are coming*, in which *they shall say to the mountains—fall on us, and to the hills, cover us.*”—Luke 23 : 17.

Thus, then, the first six seals have their most easy application and natural accomplishment furnished in the circumstances attending the first publication of christian truth, and in *the doom of that nation to whom it was first addressed*, and by

whom the message was rejected and its messengers were first persecuted. And now, seeing that "it was necessary, according to the divine counsels, that the gospel should first have been preached to the Jews; and that upon *their putting it from them* and thus *adjudging themselves unworthy of everlasting life* (Acts 13: 46) the kingdom of God should be taken from *them*, and should be given to a nation selected from among *all* nations, without respect of national privileges (Math. 21: 43);—and seeing that the heralds of grace did therefore turn and address themselves to the Gentiles; amongst whom, according to God's unrevealed, but, doubtless, holy and righteous purposes, existed an election who should hear it (Acts 28: 28):"—seeing, I say, all this,—is it not natural that the next representation of the prophetic diorama should exhibit this elect nation collected from among *Jews and Gentiles* of all nations under heaven, or (in the words of the Lord's prediction above quoted) "collected from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other?" Accordingly, the next or seventh chapter begins with a figurative representation of God's providence so ordering and tranquillizing the affairs of this noisy world, that the message of truth might reach the ears that were destined to receive it. "Four angels stood at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth: while another angel ascending from *the East*" (that quarter where light has its origin; and where, in conformity with emblematical representation, the sun of righteousness had recently arisen) "sealed the servants of God in their foreheads:"—an emblematical term expressing their confession of truth; and intimating that there were many others who *professed* the truth, but who did not *confess* it, and therefore were not sealed. A very exact number are sealed from each individual tribe of Israel: by the considerableness and preciseness of which number we are given to understand that "God had not so cast off his people, the Jews, as the language of some would intimate. For though as a nation Israel had rejected their Messiah, and had not attained what they sought for,—yet an election from Israel had obtained it; and (only) *the rest* were blinded." Thus it appeared, "that blindness only partial had happened to Israel the Hebrew nation; and that the number

wanting to furnish the full complement of the true Israel was to be supplied in the slow progress of ages from the Gentiles; even till the period assigned to the Gentile world should be fulfilled, just as had already been fulfilled the period assigned to the Jewish nation and establishment; and so was all Israel" (*all the Israel of God*, composed both of Jews and Gentiles) "to be saved." Some persons, however, incline to think that this circumstantial account of sealing precisely twelve thousand from each individual tribe of Israel by name, bears no specific reference to those members of Christ's church who were chosen from the Jewish nation: but that it is a mere typical representation of God's elective will, exercised indeed among the Gentiles, but *exemplified figuratively* by an allusion to the twelve tribes by name. But this supposition is absolutely negatived by the fact, that—*besides* the exact and complete number of a hundred and forty-four thousand sealed in precisely equal lots of twelve thousand *from each tribe*,—"there were seen also a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues: all of whom had their robes washed white in the blood of the Lamb." And since the Lamb is here particularly described as "feeding them and leading them to living fountains of waters;"—we are enabled clearly to recognize in *this* representation "*the one shepherd and the one fold*" alluded to by the Lord Jesus as the union of "*that other* (Gentile) *flock*," which, when gathered under "the one shepherd," should, with their Jewish fellows, constitute "one fold." In other words, this chapter represents the whole church of God, comprehending, in its fulness of complement, the aggregate host of the redeemed, both Jews and Gentiles.

Furthermore: the Jewish portion of this host is represented by the number one hundred and forty-four thousand; that is, by twelve thousand from each tribe. Now, the number twelve is, I contend, the apocalyptic symbol of perfection or completeness. And its employment on this occasion being manifestly intended to represent completeness *then numbered*,—we are thereby precluded from entertaining any supposition that a single Jew will, in the capacity of a Jew or natural descendant of Abraham, be *ever again added to the church*; much less that the Jews, as an

accepted or privileged nation, will ever be called to the profession of the truth, and to their country. That no Jew ever was, or ever will be, excluded from grace, or denied an entrance into the church, I cheerfully admit. But grace itself will admit him *only in the character of a Gentile*; and he must seek admission just as the uncircumcised. His city of Zion, however rebuilt, will never be restored: his temple, however re-edified, will never be the tabernacle of God; his David will never reign; his Judea is as the wilderness; and his law and dispensation are superseded for ever. For, what saith the spirit of God? "Jerusalem shall be an *everlasting* hissing. God shall bow down their backs *always*. They shall *not come into God's inheritance*. Let their habitation be desolate, and let none dwell in their tents. Add iniquity unto their iniquity, and let them not come into *thy righteousness*. Let them be *blotted out of the book of the living*, and not be *written with the righteous*. Let the extortioner consume all that he hath, and let there be none to take pity on his fatherless children. Let his habitation be void, and in the next generation let his name be blotted out." Say now,—are these quotations reconcilable with a persuasion that the Jewish nation will ever, *as a nation*, be restored to God's peculiar favour and to their country, or re-instated *as a privileged people* in Jerusalem? Can anything but violence explain them away, and render them *compatible* with the notion that the day is to come when "Jerusalem shall *not be* a hissing: that their backs shall *not always* be bowed down: that they shall *come into* God's inheritance: that their habitation shall *not be desolate*; and that they shall *dwell in their tents*: that they shall *come into righteousness*: that they shall *not be blotted out of the book of the living*; but that they shall *be written with the righteous*?" Who, that believes the scriptures to be the truth of God, will be hardy enough thus to contradict the emphatic declarations of the holy spirit? One is inclined to wonder how a Jew can evade such explicit terms, or that the deplorable dereliction of the nation should not open their eyes to the accomplishment of God's purposes. If the views of the Millennialists are correct, the expectations of the Jews are not altogether erroneous.

SEC. VIII.—*Chapter VIII. of the Book of Revelation.—
The Seventh Seal, or the Seven Trumpets.*

THE prophecy having now brought the history of God's contest with THE JEWS to a conclusion,—the well-known current of Christian and Roman history renders it natural to expect that the next subject of consideration should relate to a similar contest with the next or GENTILE opponents and persecutors.

Accordingly, "the seventh seal opens :

SEVENTH SEAL. "and after the lapse of about half an
"hour's silence in heaven, SEVEN TRUM-

"PETS are given to seven angels : and another angel, holding a
"golden censer, offers the prayers of *all* saints, together with
"much incense, upon the altar before God." The SILENCE in
HEAVEN" intimates that the NOISE about to be sounded expresses *the disturbance of* THE RULING POWERS. The term "ALL saints" expresses that the theme of their prayers which bring down the divine judgments about to be recorded in the trumpets, relates to the UNIVERSAL extension of *pagan or Gentile* persecution of the Christian cause *throughout the Roman empire*. The smoke of the incense ascends : and, obviously *as an answer to the prayers of ALL saints*, "the angel fills the same censer with FIRE" (the wrath of heaven) "from the altar, and
"casts it to the earth. Forthwith ensue "VOICES, LIGHTNINGS,
"THUNDERINGS" (popular discontent, executive severities, imperial vengeance) and finally "AN EARTHQUAKE" (the subversion of the obnoxious and tyrannical power) : and so, "the seven
"angels prepare to sound." Such is the theme of the seventh seal comprising the seven trumpets.

Now, as the first six *seals* related to the unbelieving and persecuting *Jews*, so the first six *trumpets* will be found to relate to the political power which history next presents as placing itself in opposition to the cause and adherents of truth, viz. *the ancient Roman empire*. And just so will it hereafter be seen that the *seventh trumpet*, comprehending *the seven vials*, relates to a third and the last political opponent and persecutor of truth, viz. *the modern Roman empire, and the kingdoms which had once been pro-*

vinces, and afterwards became independent parts of the empire,—or THE REIGN OF ANTICHRIST: thus concluding the mystery of God.

The explanation of the emblematical scene presented to us at the opening of the seventh seal is very simple, obvious, and easy. When the message of truth, having been rejected by the Jews, was announced to the Gentile world, *a short period* ("half an hour") elapsed before the Roman emperors and their subordinate authorities took the alarm. But soon they manifested the nature of man,—Gentile as well as Jewish,—to be unbelief and opposition of divine truth; and religious opposition speedily became civil persecution. The Emperor and the Government, the constituted authorities of God, instead of protecting innocent men, became their oppressors and persecutors. The cries of the oppressed ascended to the throne of God; and the sovereign of heaven undertook to avenge their cause, and prepared his agents for a providential contest with the sovereigns of the earth. The cries of the oppressed were responded to by the divine vengeance, which his enemies experienced in a series of national contentions represented by "*voices*;" and of providential judgments and imperial impolicies represented by "*lightnings and thunders*." These judgments favoured the final overthrow of the Roman empire, emblematically represented by *an earthquake*. I formerly remarked that each of the three series (the seals, the trumpets, and the vials) *concludes with an earthquake*, the obvious emblem of *subversion* of each power against which each series is levelled. The calamities of offending and falling Rome constitute the subject of the first six trumpets.

Now, that these six trumpets do really receive their accomplishment on the theatre of the old Roman empire is manifest, as commentators have remarked, from the circumstance that they are pointedly declared to occupy themselves on "*the third part of the earth*." It was determined, in our proposal of *principles of interpretation*, that "*the earth*" is the proper figurative representation of the *fixed or settled* state of the various political or civil *establishments*; in distinction from the *commotions of the world at large*, which is represented by "*the sea*."

Now, the "*third part* of the earth" is aptly enough applied to imperial Rome; but does not seem susceptible of application to any other great state whatsoever extant in those days. For, it may be allowed to pass for a sufficiently correct geographical assumption, that a third portion of mankind were more or less firmly subjected to Rome's imperial dominion. In this interpretation all commentators are agreed. And the only objection that I would make to their view is—that they suppose the judgments of the trumpets to refer to the Roman empire only in respect of its *pagan* establishment persecuting the Christian name. And consequently they view the conversion of Constantine and the succeeding emperors (for, the pagan reign of Julian was but momentary) as the triumph of Christianity and truth, as well as the demission of paganism from imperial elevation. This their view compels them to look elsewhere and anywhere for the accomplishment of the chief transactions of the trumpets, rather than to the empire itself and its imperial masters. We cannot indeed but admire the inconsistency of religious disputants, who at one time consent to the glories of Constantine's conversion to truth, regardless of the notorious fact that Constantine and his bishops were avowed *Arians*,—and at another time scruple not to rank *Arianism* amongst the hateful opponents of Christian truth. My views, on the contrary, lead me to see, in the history and destinies of the Roman empire *through the whole period of its existence, even up to the date of its utter extinction by the Turks*, the simple and obvious subject of God's condemnation and of the judgments of the trumpets. The holy spirit, in dictating the prophecy, made no distinction whatever between Rome pagan and Rome Christian; because it was a persecuting power, and hostile to truth under both persuasions. The civil historian, according as he inclines either to Christianity or to scepticism, either blushes or smiles at the comparison between the pagan and the Christian empire. The Christianity of the empire, whether viewed in its Eastern or in its Western departments, presents a history far more calculated to make sceptics than converts.

Of the seven trumpets the three last are emphatically designated as WOES. It is manifest therefore that these three last

trumpets, in some respect or other importantly distinguishing them, differ from the four first.—Be it remembered, that the *seventh* trumpet, expressly declared to be the third woe (chap. 11 : 13) is *the seven vials* ; which relate to *the third* of the three series of God's providential judgments : it is the history of Antichrist's reign, and pertains to the *Western* department of the Roman empire. Therefore the *fifth and sixth* trumpets, expressly declared to be the *two first* of the *three woes* (chap. 8 : 13—9 : 12—11 : 14) relate to the *Eastern* portion, and are most obviously the *Arabian and Turkish invasions*, as will plainly appear in the sequel.

Let it also be noted, that the division of the Roman empire into its two departments of Eastern and Western (which division could have interested a divine narrative only as it concerned the history of *Antichrist*) did not occur till *after the demission of paganism* by Constantine, represented in the *fourth* trumpet by the “ casting the Devil out of *heaven* down upon the *earth* :” for, the division of the empire was the act of Constantine's successors, whose reign in the *west* did not terminate for a long time after Constantine's days. Consequently, some of the trumpets, (the four first, as the reader will hereafter perceive) are common to the whole or as yet undivided empire ; while, *subsequently to the division*, the history of the *eastern* portion under its hereditary Cæsars is continued naturally in the trumpets ; and the vials are necessarily contrived to detail the history of the detached *western* portion, which became the theatre of a new kind of spiritual tyranny described in scripture as *the reign of Antichrist*. The *kind* of difference, therefore, between the *four first* trumpets, and the *three last or woes*, will presently appear, and most clearly.

The *first* trumpet is hail and fire mingled with blood, and cast upon the *earth*, burning up the *third part* of trees and all *green* corn.

The *second* is a great burning mountain cast into the *sea* ; and the *third part* of the sea became blood.

The *third* is a great burning star falling upon the *third part* of the rivers and fountains : the star is called wormwood ; and *many died of the bitter waters*.

The *fourth* is the darkening of the *third part* of the sun, moon, and stars.

Now, commentators have always sought the solution of these *four first trumpets* in the specific historical facts of the distinct inundations of the barbarous nations: whom they therefore specify as the Visigoths, Huns, Vandals, Goths, &c. But holding in view the nature of emblematical representation, we are bound to give an *emblematical* signification of *the earth, the sea, the rivers and fountains, a mountain, and the heavenly bodies, &c.* For, if they all signified the inundations of the barbarous nations and their attendant catastrophes, it would be difficult to distinguish any difference between them; they would all constitute a mere sameness and chronological repetition of similar disasters. What particular and distinct interests of the empire were affected by each of the several and confused irruptions of the barbarous invaders desolating the same fields? The effect of all and each of them upon the Roman empire was very much the same in respect of kind, and not very different in respect of degree. I contend that the true interpretation must avoid this objection, and must satisfy the necessity of the points which I have specified. I therefore apprehend that the *first four trumpets* (which are particularly contrasted with the *three last* particularly designated as *woes*,) describe those peculiar deteriorations of civil society, in respect of *national virtue, invasion by barbarous enemies, popular morals, and executive evils*, which, by their reciprocal influences on the governed and on their governors, constitute the *decline* of an empire, subjecting it naturally and necessarily to those catastrophes which terminate in *its fall*. The moral virtues of a people and their peace-maintaining government tend providentially to advance and aggrandize a nation: corruption of morals providentially enfeebles it. A corrupt state of national society can furnish only a corrupt government; and a corrupt government re-acts upon the governed, by oppression, rapacity, tyranny, cruelty. These vices of a government produce poverty, discontent, disaffection, and want of public spirit or love of country; inviting foreign aggression, fomenting division, insurrection, and civil war; and *thus favouring invasion*. Thus by their virtues have empires

risen; and thus by their degeneracies have they fallen. Thus eminently rose and fell great Rome; and thus, if I mistake not, is her *decline* detailed in *the four first trumpets*, as her *fall* (in the *eastern world*) will be detailed in *the two last*, or the fifth and sixth, or the two first of *the three woes*; the third woe being the destruction of the *western empire*.

SEC. IX.—*The Trumpets.***FIRST TRUMPET.**

Hail, fire, and blood cast upon *the earth*, and burning up *the third part of trees* and of all *green*, i.e., unripe corn,—express the civil and social evils of a community, manifested in ruinous and burning strife and sanguinary contentions amongst a people *not yet fully ripe* for providential destruction. The singular difference expressed by the distinction of “trees” from “green corn” signifies, perhaps, the contests occurring between the barbarian provinces and the Roman states of the empire; the trees and the green corn (the respective produce of unreclaimed and of reclaimed soils) meaning the more barbarous and the more civilized nations of the extended empire. I incline, however, to the persuasion that the cruel contests here predicted are of a civil and social nature, arising out of religious contention between pagan (the trees or ancient occupants of the soil) and mock christian parties (green corn or the late-introduced christian profession) not yet devoted to destruction. For, be it remembered that this spirit of civil and social dissension is a divine visitation in answer to “the prayers of *all saints*,” on account of injustice and cruelty practised upon a harmless and unprotected people, the primitive disciples of Christ. For the specific meaning of the specific figures, viz., “the earth, the sea, the rivers and fountains, a mountain cast into the sea and inundating the third part of the earth, hail, the sun, moon, stars, &c.,” I must refer the reader to the principles of interpretation stated in a former page.

SECOND TRUMPET. "A burning mountain cast into the sea" expresses the burning violence of sanguinary warfare result-

ing from commotions of the world, and consequently of the Roman empire or third part of the world, caused by irruptive hosts of barbarous nations, dislodged from their proper or native seats, and bearing down (like a burning mountain rushing into the ocean) and agitating the whole world and its third part, the oppressed Roman empire. For, as the fixed earth means an established empire, so, I presume, a moving mountain cast into the sea means the irruptions of vast hosts causing vast conflagrations and commotions in the world at large, and inundations of the land by the swollen waters of the agitated ocean.

THIRD TRUMPET. "A burning star" falling upon the rivers and fountains, and rendering their waters "*bitter and deadly*,"

expresses the bitter and deadly spirit of society at large, arising from the religiously and morally depraved state of the provincial and municipal elements of the empire. A fallen star is a very fit emblem of the baneful influence of degenerate or spurious christianity upon the embittered factions and deadly feuds of the Christian sects, and of a world divided between pagan and mock-Christian opponents: the milk of humanity and christianity being turned to gall and "*wormwood*," the emblem here employed as the name of the fallen star. What other fallen star, or degenerate power, except Christianity, can with any probability have been intended?

FOURTH TRUMPET. "The darkening of the sun, moon, and stars" expresses the half-extinction of the political and

civil institutions of a once beneficial government, arising from civil and social degeneracy consequent upon the moral and religious depravity described in the preceding trumpets; aggravated *perhaps* by Constantine's and his successors division of the empire into Eastern and Western, and by the subsequent and perhaps consequent eclipse of the Western portion of the empire.

Thus am I persuaded that no particular barbarous nation is honoured with a specific delineation in any one of these the first four trumpets: but that they describe in a general way *the civil, political, social, moral, and religious conditions and catastrophes* befalling the empire, and preparing it, by a decay of all its institutions and interests, for its ultimate fall. They therefore represent *the civil dissensions of a community, the ruinous wars of a state, the moral depravations of a society, the decline of an empire, and the mental darkening of a religiously debased and intellectually degenerate people*, all verging surely to destruction.

Nevertheless, with respect to this general mode of interpreting the four first trumpets, I may be permitted to say,—that the candid student of the Revelation will readily perceive and acknowledge that such general topics of the political and moral predicaments of the empire, however great their importance and concern in the subsequent and final catastrophes of the two following trumpets, are not of that definite nature which could enable or even require me to insist with pertinacious confidence that the objects constituting these my interpretations of the four first trumpets, are circumstantially and precisely what I have represented them. All that I do with confidence advance, or even desire to advance, is—that *such is the nature* of the things represented. The studious reader of the prophecy may very possibly discover a more correct application of the principles of interpretation, and a more correct solution of the figures employed.

The style, however, or tenor of this interpretation recommends itself with additional force, as we come to perceive the strict propriety of design and the general conformity of plan distinguishable in the three series of the seals, trumpets, and vials; and the natural accordance obviously maintained in the various figures of the several parts of this most correct, unique, and unrivalled composition. A comparison of the respective plans observed in each of the three series will show that the design of each is to manifest the divine judgments as falling upon nations and their civil establishments providentially, in accordance with a natural law connecting moral cause with physical effect; i. e. inducing judicial penalty or providential

judgment upon moral evil. The destruction, first, of the Jewish nation,—next, of the ancient or Eastern Roman Empire,—and lastly, of the modern or Western Roman empire, under the influence of spurious Christianity,—connects, by a natural relation, their national depravity and executive abuses with national degeneracy, calamity and subversion: the degeneracy, depravity, and abuses being represented in the four first of each of the three series of the seals, trumpets, and vials: the subversion of each obnoxious power being represented in *the last of each series* by an *earthquake*, the natural emblem of *subversion*.

Nevertheless, in all the instances wherein revelation enables us to contemplate *the motives* of God's providential dealings with mankind, we can discern that his forbearance, far surpassing the term of human patience, is as conspicuous as his justice. God (I am persuaded) expects not from unconverted men the obedience of saints; but only the humanity of human moral intelligence: this he certainly does, in his providential rule, require. Thus we find that, in the days of Abraham, God deferred at *that* time the execution of his righteous judgments upon the nations of Canaan, "*because the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full.*" Nor was it the superior merits of the Israelites,—but the wickedness of the Canaanites, that turned those nations out. The destruction of the Sodomite states seems, by the providential rule proposed by God himself, and acknowledged to Abraham, to have been forborne beyond the term of human forbearance. The destruction of Nineveh was averted by national humiliation promissory of *moral* reform, even to the mortification of the prophet who had denounced the city. The tyrant of Babylon was counselled by Daniel to try if the impending and denounced wrath of God might be averted "by correcting the offensive abuses of despotism, and by a humane exercise of his delegated powers towards his oppressed subjects." The Jewish nation did not experience long-merited vengeance, till their incorrigible corruption, tyranny, and blasphemy had been published to the wide world, as an appeal even to human opinion. Nor will the civil historian deny that the moral enormities of ancient Rome and of its government were surpassed only by the forbearance of God, whose vengeance the

indignant moralist would have quickened by the anticipation of centuries. And now, when at length we approach the subversion of that ancient empire in its Eastern department (for its Western portion was never made the subject of total annihilation or utter destruction), we find that the awful judgment was designed as an example to the Western states, providentially warning them against the injustice, cruelty, superstition, and depravity of the respective nations ; but warning them in vain.—Chap. 9 : 20, 21.

Such being the nature of God's providential dispensations, the judicious and faithful student of the Revelation "of things that are to come to pass," is strongly prompted to expect that a prophetic history of all future ages, bearing upon a specific and chosen Christian people scattered amongst the world's various nations, would be conducted with an obvious reference to the specific purpose and providential rule of the deity, who thus "verily judgeth the earth in righteousness, and the people with his truth." Yet he would expect that—while the curtain which conceals God's invisible presence is drawn aside in the predictions of prophecy, in order to exhibit his specific designs to the eye of faith ;—the transactions predicted would, in their accomplishment, present that natural appearance to the natural eye, which leaves to the natural mind no spiritual perception of those things which are only spiritually or believably discerned.

Without giving, then, any further consideration to the *three first trumpets*, I will briefly animadvert upon the *fourth*, by asserting that it expresses the state of the Roman world on the demission of paganism or of the Dragon from imperial ascendancy, and the obscuration of Rome's splendour at and after the period when Constantine renounced the ancient faith and seat of empire ; embracing a spurious and debasing Christianity, and transferring the seat of government from Rome to Byzantium, which thenceforward was named Constantinople : thus dividing the Roman empire into *two* distinct departments, which soon became distinct empires weakened by the very circumstances of division, and *requiring* the prophetic historian to assign to each its distinct history, viz. the remaining (fifth and

sixth) *trumpets* to the Eastern department, and *the seventh trumpet* or seven vials to the Western. Both the demission of paganism and the transfer of the seat of government by Constantine favoured the disseverment of the empire, and probably accelerated the period when its ancient form was limited to Constantinople and its dependencies. The eventual effect of this division was, that the *Western* empire of *old Rome* was overwhelmed by its forcibly adopted subjects and invaders from *the North*; and the *Eastern* empire of Constantinople was victimized by the Saracens from *the South*, who conquered its Asiatic provinces and contracted it almost to its European adjacent territories; leaving to the Turks *the subversion* of its feeble remnant of empire. Therefore *the two remaining trumpets*, the fifth and sixth, relate only to the *Eastern* empire; while the seventh trumpet, or *the seven vials*, detail fully the fate of the *Western* empire, the peculiar seat of (*reigning*) Antichrist.

I am confirmed in this opinion concerning *the fourth trumpet* by reflecting on the general current of Roman history as detailed in *the three following trumpets*, specifically distinguished from their predecessors as "woes." *The two first woes* are declared by the prophet himself (chap. 8: 13) to be *the fifth and sixth trumpet*, and are comprised in the first division of the prophecy ending with the tenth chapter: while the *seventh trumpet*, or *the third woe*, is *the seven vials*, and occupies the second division of the prophecy, beginning with the eleventh chapter; being obviously some power distinct from the power treated of in the six preceding trumpets, occupying the first division of the prophecy or a large portion of it. Therefore the two first woes, or the fifth and sixth trumpets, are some great calamities befalling the *Eastern* empire, to which the series of *the trumpets* belongs; as the seventh trumpet, or the vials, is declared (chap. 11: 14, 15) to be *the third woe*. This third woe is therefore some great and destructive calamity befalling the *Western* empire, to which the series of *the vials* or seventh trumpet belongs. And accordingly the two first woes, or the fifth and sixth trumpets, are detailed in the first grand division of the book, which ends with the tenth chapter, and disposes of the *Eastern* empire: as the third woe is detailed in the second grand division of the book,

and disposes of the *Western* empire. Now, the fifth and sixth trumpets are obviously the Mahometan, or the *Arabian* and the *Turkish*, invasions of the *Eastern* empire; as the reader, I doubt not, will acknowledge when we come to examine them. They merited indeed the distinguishing epithet "woes" because they were specific catastrophes, and because they broke down and finally destroyed the Eastern empire, introducing a base superstition over the *East*; just as the vials introduced a base superstition (under the name of Christianity) over the *West*, and finally destroyed, or will destroy, that *modern* Roman empire which commenced with Charlemagne, who styled it "*the empire of the Cæsars, or the German or holy Roman empire*," the temporal protector of that *spiritual* empire which the Popes of Rome claimed, and which the clergy instituted over all the countries of the Western division of the old Roman world. Now, these notorious facts, explanatory of the transactions of the *fifth, sixth, and seventh* trumpets, justify and induce us to look back from them to preceding events, for the accomplishment of the *fourth* trumpet (which thus takes its natural and historical place in and about the age of Constantine) as being the period next and prior, in respect both of political importance and of time, to the invasion of the Saracens who preceded the Turks, or, in other words, to the *fifth and sixth* trumpets.

SEC. X.—Chapter IX. of the Book of Revelation.—*The Fifth Trumpet, or the First Woe.*

The fifth trumpet "darkens the sun and the air with smoke:" that is, it obscures, but does not absolutely extinguish, the government, and destroy the empire which it largely enveloped. "Out of the smoke come locusts, which sting," i. e. poison; "but are forbidden to hurt those who have the seal of God on their foreheads. These locusts are commissioned for a period of five months; and they have a king over them whose name is Apollyon in Greek, and Abaddon in Hebrew;" in English, *the destroyer*.

The locust is evidently an emblem of Arabia, the country where, in all ages, as at the present day, the flights of locusts which desolate Asia and Africa are generated. The darkening of *the sun* and *the air* with *smoke*, out of which smoke came the locusts, signifies very aptly the Arabian or Mahometan imposture; which inspired the Saracens with the lust and confidence of conquest; enabling them to propagate their superstition over all the governments and people (the sun and the air) of the East. The peculiar name* of *their king* has reference, I presume, to the prophet, or rather to the peculiarity of the superstition of the Mahometan imposture, and to the peculiar character common to the Saracens and Turks, and exhibiting both people as impelled by a superstition animating them with a singular spirit of martial fanaticism, which enabled them to propagate their religion with the sword, and to obliterate the vestige, or at least to ensure the degradation, of every other faith. Thus Mahometanism became, in a double sense, *the Destroyer*: receiving most appropriately an appellation stigmatizing it as the instrument providentially employed to execute the predestined extinction both of *the religion* and of the *Roman empire* of the East.

By the locusts being forbidden to hurt or kill those who had the seal of God on their *foreheads*, is to be understood, I conceive, that no *true* worshippers of God, and *confessors* of Jesus

* *The names* of persons, and therefore of things allegorically personified, were originally intended to express their distinguishing character. Apollyon, therefore, in Greek, and Abaddon in Hebrew, both signifying *Destroyer*, convey to us the character of this dispensation of divine wrath: just as the term "Armageddon" will be found hereafter clearly to inform us of the occasion and nature of that contest in which the Beast and the false Prophet (the Western empire and the antichristian teachers of false Christianity) meet their judicial doom. It is remarkable that the celebrated historian of "the decline and fall of the Roman empire" commences his sixty-eighth chapter (wherein the siege and conquest of Constantinople by Mahomet the second are detailed) with the following clause:—"The siege of Constantinople by the Turks attracts our first attention to the person and character of the great destroyer." Nor have I a doubt that Gibbon knew and fully intended the application of the term he employed, as a compliment to the scriptural prediction of the historical catastrophe which he was recording. Reflecting on the immense idolatry of the Eastern Christians, we cannot but admire the singular aptitude of the divine dispensation of vengeance which brought the Arabians to assert the unity of the Godhead.

Christ, were amongst the number of the many who were deceived or intimidated into an acknowledgment of the impostor's religious pretensions. The period of five months assigned for the duration of the locusts, means possibly one hundred and fifty years, according to the popular rule of interpretation which gives an historical year for each prophetic day. It must indeed be acknowledged, that during or rather *about* that period of time, the Saracen empire is represented (by historians thoroughly exempt from all suspicion of a desire to verify the prophecies of scripture) as existing in a flourishing condition, or as possessing the power of plaguing (in apocalyptic language, threatening the conquest of) the Roman *Western* empire. But I acknowledge my prejudice that the *Western* world did not bear a character of *discipleship*, according to the interpretation which construes the "*not hurting those that had the seal of God on their foreheads,*" as an intimation of the orthodoxy, or rather, of the true spirituality of the christianity of the West. I incline however altogether to the persuasion, that no literal or exact period is intended by the "five months," *nor yet by any other number employed in the Apocalypse* : but that this number "five" has the somewhat lax or rather indefinite signification of our "half a dozen" or half of our indefinite "*dozen* : " the apocalyptic number "ten" being, as I conceive, intended to express an *indefinite small* number. I am led to this persuasion by different considerations. *The numbers* employed throughout the Apocalypse are, I conceive, no exception to the rule that *all* the representations in the book are purely figurative, and therefore that the numbers (like the colours, the hieroglyphical creatures, the celestial bodies, the terrestrial elements, &c., &c.,) are *symbolical*. Consequently, they are *never* to be allowed a strictly *numerical or chronological* interpretation ; but they are *always* of an *arithmetical or proportional* signification. Can it be conceived that either "half an hour" or "three days and a half" are terms representing the exact proportions of time which these very brief periods bear to *a day* or supposed *prophetical year* ? All the figures employed in the book were, doubtless, intended to be understood by the faithful in all ages : or else I cannot understand what purpose the narrative was designed to fulfil, unless

indeed its figures were intended to be understood only when the facts represented by them were accomplished and past, or, in other words, when their prediction was of no other use than to show that they had been predicted, and therefore that their prediction and accomplishment proved the miraculous truth of God. Yet surely the Revelation must have been intended to convey to *disciples* such knowledge of the general issue of events in all periods of history, as should suffice in all ages for their assurance and comfort under trials and afflictions. The holy spirit could never have designed to furnish them with a mere historical registry, or almanack. It was certainly not necessary, nor, as I conceive, possible, even with every conceivable assistance of dates, for the faithful to fix with precision the *commencement* of the general historical incidents to which an apocalyptic date has been assigned: consequently, the date of *their termination* could not possibly be thus foreshown. If exactness of date were ever to be desired for the sake of its utility, one would surely expect to see it supplied to that portion of the prophecy which details the destruction of Jerusalem; and which the disciples must have been vitally concerned to ascertain with precision, in order to escape the miseries of that dreadful calamity. Yet no number intimating the time of that event is furnished to the seal descriptive of that catastrophe. Disciples had indeed been long previously furnished with *signs* for that occasion; but from the calamities to which the Apocalypse furnishes *dates*, no escape could have been secured even by a knowledge of the date of their *termination*, unless the date also of the *commencement of the calculation* were furnished. I am aware indeed of the opinion generally held, that the Revelation was intended for a display of prophetic verity merely when the events foreshown shall have transpired; thus to induce admiration of the divine truth which had predicted what the divine power performed. But, though I acknowledge this indeed to have been one great purpose of the prophecy, yet my conviction is, that the chief or immediate design of the book was to furnish consolation to the afflicted in the day of their suffering, and confirmation to the terrified in the day of national convulsion and shipwreck of worldly peace and enjoyment: in short, to convey to disciples

in all ages of persecution, and in every predicament of trial, the important truth, that God, in all his providential dispensations, is working the happy issue of their calamities, and the triumph of the cause in which their eternal interests are involved. When we come to consider the *ten* horns of the beast, we shall be better able to estimate the force of the number "*five*" which being *the half* of "*ten*," is obviously correlative. In the mean time I will submit—"the five month's duration of the locusts' power to hurt" represents an *indefinitely* short period; short at least when compared with some much longer periods, though longer than other much shorter periods assigned to different apocalyptic transactions. So much for "the five months."

The horse-like heads of the locusts; their crowns of gold; their faces of men, and their hair like women's hair,—represent, I presume, the Arabian horsemen; that mixture of the martial and imperial, the masculine virtues and effeminate sensuality, which constitute the character of merciless rapacity and lustful violence distinguishing the Saracen conquerors and religionists. The resemblance of their *teeth* and *breastplates* to iron, bespeaks their *rapacious* and *unrelenting* ferocity. The sound of their wings like that of horses running to battle, represents the irresistibility of their equestrian invasions, and the rapidity of their conquests. And their scorpion-like and stinging tails represent the poisonous superstition that attended and tracked their march to dominion. All these interpretations commend themselves by their simplicity, by their conformity of figurative style, and by the absence of all violence and straining to force description into compliance with interpretation.

The sixth trumpet or second woe

SIXTH TRUMPET. now sounds; and "a voice from the
 "four horns of the golden altar com-
 "mands the *four* angels who are *bound* in the great river
 "Euphrates to be *loosed*; who had been *prepared* for an hour,
 "and a day, and a month, and a year, to slay *the third part* of
 "*men*. The number of the horsemen were two hundred thou-
 "sand thousand. By these *the third part* of men were killed:

“and *the rest* who were not killed, yet repented not of their murders, sorceries, fornications, and thefts.”

This voice from the golden altar signifies, I presume, that the judgment now about to be executed on the *Eastern* Roman empire, is God’s providential reply to the cries of his oppressed and persecuted servants; or his *providential* mode of avenging the death and sufferings of his martyrs, on that cruel power which, in all ages of its existence, and in all its forms, has advocated superstition, oppressed divine truth, and harassed its assertors. The specification of the *four* horns of the altar alludes, I presume, to the *universality* of the oppression practised on Christ’s disciples in *all* the provinces subjected to Rome’s dominion. The divine judgments are represented as falling on the Roman empire at the command of Christ’s martyrs; just as the destruction of Jerusalem had been represented in the seals as God’s reply to his people’s complaints uttered in the *fifth* seal immediately preceding the final blow inflicted on the *Jewish* nation in the *sixth seal*: and just as we shall hereafter see, that, “the two witnesses,” or the Church of Christ, have the power of visiting *their* enemies, the *Western* Romans, with the judgment of God’s providences. For, the whole book of Revelation is but a Christian commentary on the world’s history; showing, that amidst all the convulsions of nations, God’s providence is but ordering affairs with reference to the cause of truth and its advocates. And as the sixth or last *seal* dealt destruction to the *Jewish* establishment; so now the sixth or last *trumpet* deals destruction to the *Eastern* Roman empire: and so also the last *vial* will hereafter be seen to deal destruction to the *Western* Roman empire, and to the *political* reign of its spiritual accomplice, or rather, principal—*Antichrist*. The finishing blow of *each* of the three establishments, the *Jewish* kingdom, the *Eastern* empire, and the *Western* empire, is represented by an *earthquake*, the apocalyptic and apt emblem of subversion signified in the sixth seal, sixth trumpet, and seventh vial, *i. e.* by the *last* of each series. That the *Roman* empire in its principal or *Eastern* department, is verily the power, against which the judgments of the *sixth trumpet* are levelled, is evident

from the expression "the third part of men:" which term, occurring twice in this detail of the events of the sixth trumpet, determines it (as indeed the preceding trumpets are similarly determined) to that far-extended empire, which sanctioned and promoted the cruelties practised upon the servants of God. That *only one portion* of the entire Roman empire was involved in the destruction intimated in this *woe* is plainly signified by the fact, that this "killing of the third part of men" did not check "the rest of the men that were not killed; who still persisted in their murders, sorceries, fornications, and thefts." This *other portion* of the third part of men, I presume, to be the nations of the *Western* empire.

When God, upon a former occasion, was about to visit Jerusalem with the judgments of predicted desolation, he prepared the providential agents of his wrath aforehand: and bringing the Romans from afar, he committed to *them* the execution of his purpose. So now, when the long-purposed period or exact and predestined time, or the very "hour, day, month, and year" of Rome's duration, and God's accumulated wrath had arrived; he raised up *the Turks* whom he had destined to a similar service. The "loosing of the *four* angels which lay *bound* in the great river *Euphrates* signifies, I presume, that the *four leading nations of Asia of historical notoriety and prophetic record* (the nations of Assyria, Media, Persia, and Asiatic Greece) which had formerly themselves partaken of dominion, and, having successively followed the destinies of preceding empires and their imperial decay, had long lain "*bound*" in subjection to Rome, were now finally and utterly "*loosed*" from her dominion; and having long before embraced Mahometanism, were to contribute their myriads to the conquest of Constantinople, and the extinction of the *Eastern* empire.* By these myriads were

* In the year 622 of the Christian era Mahomet fled from Mecca to Medina, and commenced the work of propagating the Mahometan faith by force of arms. So soon was the superstition fully fledged, which he had been hatching during twelve years. Forty-six years after this flight or Hegeira of Mahomet, the Saracens or Arabians, after subjecting a large portion of Asia and Africa, appeared in arms under the walls of Constantinople. The "*hour and day*," however, of Rome's fate had not then arrived. So much for the Saracens.

"the third part of men to be killed ;* of course *figuratively*, i. e. *politically* killed, or *conquered* : and the Eastern Roman empire was to be annihilated." And *the rest* of the "men that were *not killed*" or conquered (those nations of the other or *Western* portion of the empire, who were not involved in the Turkish conquests) were nevertheless not admonished by the providential instruction furnished in the example of their

* Towards the end of the tenth century of Christ, the Turks, a branch of that great Northern Asiatic, or Scythian, or Tartar family of the human race, which had for ages past supplied successive swarms to the annoyance and devastation of Europe as well as of China, began to spread from the North-eastern parts of Asia, over the Southern, South-western, and Eastern, or Indian and Chinese regions of the Asiatic continent ; and in the year 1050, having long adopted the Mahometan faith, they invaded the Roman empire of the East. The great historian of "the decline and fall of the Roman empire" describes that invasion in these words :—"The myriads of Turkish horse overspread a frontier of 600 miles : and the blood of 130,000 Christians was a grateful sacrifice to the Arabian prophet." Four hundred years after this period, viz. in the year 1453, the city of Constantinople (to the walls of which metropolis the *Eastern* Roman empire had then become limited) fell beneath the power of Mahomet, the second Sultan or *Turkish* monarch of that name. Now, it is to be considered, that during all that period which had elapsed between the first conquest of the *Saracens*, and the final conquest of Constantinople by the *Turks*—that is during a period of eight hundred years—the nations of Asia had gradually and indeed rapidly become assimilated to, and incorporated with the *Saracens* and *Turks* ; and baptism had been entirely superseded by circumcision. And consequently in the middle of the fifteenth century, when Constantinople fell, the *Eastern* Roman empire had lost the greater part, and at length the last, of its Asiatic provinces. The Assyrians, Medes, Persians, and Asiatic Greeks (each of whom had once enjoyed empire, and had been subjected to Rome) were thus released from the bond of Roman subjection ; and being more or less amalgamated with the Turkish power, contributed now their myriads to the overthrow of the Eastern empire. And thus the apocalyptic prophecy became an historical fact ; or in the language of figurative representation, "*the four angels that lay bound in the great river Euphrates, were loosed.*" Observe now the language of the *sixth vial* : which, being the parallel history of synchronous events occurring to the *Western* department of the Roman empire, represents "the waters of the *great river Euphrates* as being dried up, to allow the *kings of the East*" (*the conquerors of the Eastern empire*, who are represented in the trumpets as wearing crowns of gold, the emblem of empire) to pass over into Europe, in order that they might there constitute one of the plagues of Antichrist and the Man of Sin. In fact, the *Turks*, who subverted the *Eastern* empire, and settled in Constantinople and its adjacent provinces, were also "a plague" of the *Western* empire. And therefore "*the great river Euphrates*" supplies the elements not only of the *sixth trumpet*, but also of the *sixth vial* : and the *Turkish invasion* furnishes the one historical incident fulfilling the double purpose of God's providential judgments both of the destroying of the Eastern, and of plaguing the Western departments of the Roman empire.

Eastern brethren : they yet repented not of their *cruelties, superstitions, idolatry, and rapacity,*" practised against the various subjects and victims of their mal-administration, and, *amongst these,* against the servants of God and the confessors of his name.

It is observable that the locusts of the *fifth* trumpet, and the horses of the *sixth* are, both of them, represented with scorpion's and serpents' tails, having the power of *stinging*, i. e. of deadly venom. This peculiarity common to the two powers represented in the two trumpets, designates the deadly superstition common both to the Saracens and Turks, viz. :—the Mahometan faith propagated by these ferocious conquerors upon the nations subjected to their arms.

The progress of the apocalyptic history having now brought the *Eastern* empire of Rome to a termination, we arrive at that stage whereat, according to the order of historical detail, the seventh trumpet *ought* to sound, and to announce the strange events which, whether concurrent with or subsequent to the affairs of the *Eastern* empire, succeeded as a subject for the historian's pen on the theatre of declining *Western* Rome. But as we have now arrived within eleven verses of the termination of the *first of the two grand divisions* of the prophetic book ;— and as the *second division* is intended (see chap. X : 6, 7, 11) to give a full and particular detail of all those strange events which, inasmuch as they were transacted upon the theatre of the *Western* Roman empire, could not without confusion of time and place have been introduced into a narrative mainly concerning the *Eastern* department of the empire ; it behoved that a method should be devised of completing the *first* narrative or division of the book, by a very abridged representation, or, rather, notice of the transactions detailed at full length in the *second* division. Accordingly, the angel of truth puts a *little* and *open* book into the prophet's hand, whereupon

seven *thunders* utter their words.

THE SEVEN THUNDERS. These the prophet was about to write, (a clear proof that the incidents were of a common historical nature) but was relieved from the necessity of detailing them, by a most solemn assurance

of the eternal God (for the strong consolation, doubtless, of his persecuted people) that the seventh trumpet *yet to sound should furnish the accomplishment of these seven thunders*, and should *finish the mystery of God* ; that is, should *detail God's providential purposes* in the execution of those providential operations which are eventually to perfect the deliverance of his people from *civil* oppression, and thereby finally establish the peace of the church or the temporal prosperity of the Messiah's kingdom. Now, the seventh trumpet comprises the several subjects of the seven vials or "the seven last plagues:" in which are accomplished the wrath and purposes of God upon the last political enemy of Messiah's kingdom, and oppressor of his people, viz. Antichrist. It is manifest, therefore, that the *little book*, as Newton observes, briefly represents those future judgments of God which are recorded at large in the second or subsequent division of the prophecy, beginning with the eleventh chapter : and that *the seven thunders* are not merely synchronous, but *synonymous* with *the seven vials*. This little book or abridgment of the vials is represented as being *open*, i.e., as having its seal already broken : because its contents (the seven thunders) virtually expose the transactions of the vials or *seventh trumpet* ; which, as well as the six preceding *trumpets*, is comprised in the seventh or very last of *the seals* already long previously opened. The prophet, being commanded to eat this little book, or as we should express it, to taste and digest its contents, found it sweet in his mouth, but bitter when swallowed. Which means, that though *the foretaste* of the deliverance from immediate or pagan persecution (which the disciples of Christ were then suffering) and the knowledge of Antichrist's doom (which the little book anticipates in the seven thunders) were a joyful communication to him whose hopes were fed by the promise of the triumph of truth ; yet was the joyful anticipation qualified with the *bitter* reflection that this triumph and deliverance was to be preceded by ages of oppression.

So much for the first grand division of the Apocalypse ending with the tenth chapter.

With respect to the angel's (supposed) declaration, "that time shall be no more," I do not deem it necessary to say more than that the Greek text "*οἱ χρόνοι οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι*" is literally, and I should

think, *satisfactorily* rendered by “*that time (the time) shall not be yet.*” The translation “*that time shall be no more*” is neither *literal, nor correct, nor reconcilable with the very next clause of the sentence*, which says, *but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel the mystery of God shall be finished.*” Surely, the conjunction “*but*” in the latter clause requires peremptorily the “*not yet*” of the former clause : and the necessities of the whole sentence forbid the notion that time was to be no more : unless, indeed, we could persuade ourselves that the meaning is—that the seven thunders carry the prophetic history down to the end of all things.

SEC. XI.—*Preliminary Remarks to the Seven Vials.*

OF ANTICHRIST.

HAVING concluded God’s providential judgments upon the *ancient Roman Empire* in its *Eastern* department, or the *second great political* opponent of Messiah’s truth and *spiritual kingdom*;—and having finished the *first grand division* of the Apocalypse terminating with the *tenth* chapter, we have now to study the *second grand division* of the book, beginning with the *eleventh* chapter, or the history of the *third and last great political opponent* of the truth : which history is displayed in the transactions of the *Western* department of the old Roman empire, as it was revived in the persons of Charlemagne and his successors, by whose aid the empire of popery was first instituted in the year 800, and has ever since been supported. The subject of this last opposition we *reasonably conclude* to be the history of the tyranny of Antichrist and the man of sin ; though these well-known scriptural names are nowhere literally employed in the pages of the Apocalypse. This conclusion is justified by reflecting, that *names* specifically employed in the other writings of the apostles as the subject of their engrossing solicitude for the fate of the church of Christ during a long period of future ages, must needs be the same with that peculiar and protracted tyranny which constitutes the prominent subject of so large a portion of the Apocalypse. Nor is it reasonable to suppose that the Antichrist of John’s Epistles is any other than the *unnamed* personage of John’s Apocalypse.

It has been supposed by most commentators, and, of course, not reluctantly conceded by their Protestant readers, that Antichrist is but another name for the church of Rome and its spiritual head the Pope. But, that Antichrist cannot mean the church of Rome exclusively, is evident from the fact that the Apostle John, who wrote this very Book of Revelation, declares in his Epistles, "that there were many Antichrists even in *his* days." Now, it is not likely (nor, indeed, is there any foundation whatever in all the writings of the Apostles for such an opinion) that the peculiar and characteristic absurdities and blasphemies distinguishing the Church of Rome had any existence whatever amongst the heresies current in the days of the Apostles. Is there the most distant hint in all their writings that there existed in *their* days any such heretical doctrines as those of a *priesthood* or specifically holy, or sacrificing, or mediating class of men in the Christian dispensation;—of the *sacrifice* of the mass; of the *intercession* of departed saints; of the *homage paid to the Virgin Mary*, who must have been an equal object of veneration during her life, as after her death; of a *vicegerency* of Christ, or of a *power vested by God in any individual, to confer upon other individuals the power of forgiving sins, or even of pronouncing the pardon of God, and thus clearing the offender's conscience of its sense of sin?* Do we ever read even of an Apostle pronouncing such words as, "son, thy sins are forgiven;" or "I absolve thee from all thy sins?" Surely the day will come when men will be astonished at such blasphemy. Does the forgiveness uttered by an Apostle, or by a church with an Apostle's authority, imply anything more than that *the local associations of disciples*, like all other corporate associations in society, retained or re-admitted an offender to their fellowship, upon his satisfying them of his repentance? And seeing that the authority of the Apostles was conferred on them solely for the edification of the churches established by them, do we not at once perceive the nature and purpose of that power which Christ entrusted to his Apostles when he told them "whosoever sins ye remit or retain they are remitted or retained?" Do we not, I say, clearly comprehend that this power concerned only (as it was *never otherwise exercised than in*) the admission or the expul-

sion of a member from the body? These, however, (the absurd and blasphemous peculiarities just quoted) are prominent features in the character of the church of Rome; though most, or even all of them are inherited from her (in a mitigated form, indeed,) by other and Protestant ecclesiastical establishments. But though the very existence of these Romish doctrines in the days of the Apostles is not to be traced in the Apostolic allusions to the heresies then current; yet Antichrist existed (as the Apostle John himself declares) *in his days*. And such was the nature of the principle of the anti-christian error, even in its origin or small beginning during the apostolic period of the church, that in the primitive personage and rudimental embryo might be recognized (as the Apostles Paul and John declare) the genius, character, and principle of the future and developed man of sin or Antichrist; of him whose wiles are calculated "to deceive the very elect:" so calculated were they to impose on the carnal mind of the devout professor of Christianity.

Since, then, the pretensions of error and heresy are so deceptive, the question naturally presents itself, and presses with peculiar interest on the earnestly inquiring mind of a true disciple,—what, in the Apostle's mind, constituted the distinguishing character, principle, or "spirit of Antichrist?" Now, the Apostle John himself answers, and, we may be sure, fully answers this important question. And if any one sees not the importance and sufficiency of the answer, doubtless it is because he understands it not; and therefore should he the more diligently and critically study the Apostle's definition, to its minutest letter. He tells us *wherein consists* the spirit of *Antichrist*, "whereof," says he, "ye have heard that it should come; and *even now already is it in the world.*" Believe not every spirit (doctrine); but try the spirits, whether they be of God;" try them *by the following test*. "Every spirit that *confesseth* that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God; and every spirit that *confesseth* not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God." This passage may be fairly paraphrased thus:—every doctrine that *comporteth* with the professors acknowledgment of belief that *Jesus is the Messiah*, i. e., he who was expected in his *human person* to establish a spiritual kingdom ruling over the

people of God,—is of God: and every doctrine *not so comporting with the truth of God, or belieing that profession is not of God.* “They” (the false teachers or Antichrists described by the Apostle) “*are of the world*” (that world, of which Christ had declared, “my kingdom is *not of this world;*” that is, not of a temporal or civil nature;) “therefore speak they *of the world*” (they speak the *principles* of the world’s most approved wisdom and policy; with all devoutness, morality, and attractiveness) “and the world hears them,” (approving, of course, the very best principles of human prudence). “We” (the Apostles) “*are of God* (and not *of the world*): “he that knoweth God, *heareth us*: he that is not of God, *heareth not us*. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.” Christ had already, during his earthly converse with the Apostles, taught them the very same truth which the Apostle John here puts forward as the test of true discipleship: “he that heareth you heareth me; and he that heareth not you, heareth not me.” To *deny*, then, the Messiah, by renouncing or disregarding the apostolic authority established by Christ for the rule of his kingdom, or the uniform obedience of his people, was the comprehensive error or *principle* and the general characteristic spirit of Antichrist. For, be it observed, to refuse recognition of the apostolic authority is “to deny Jesus Christ,” or “to confess not that he is come in the human person” as the king of his spiritual kingdom. To deny the authorities established by Christ for the spiritual rule of his spiritual kingdom, is to deny Christ. The term “*confess*” is pointedly and almost invariably used in the New Testament, as a distinction from, and criterion of oral *profession*: and the term “*deny*” is as obviously used often, and even generally, to express the *inconsistencies of men’s acts and tenets with their general profession of Christianity* (2 Tim. 3, 5—Tit. 1, 16—Jude 4.) It is indeed obvious that this anti-christian denial of Christ must have been merely a virtual denial of the faith, and not an avowal of unbelief. “In word these false teachers acknowledged Christ; it was in works they denied him:” “they had, indeed, the form of Godliness; but they denied the power:” they belied their profession. It would surely have been an unnecessary piece of instruction for the

Apostle to inform his readers that professors of paganism *denied* Jesus Christ. In a Christian country, every one will of course acknowledge Christ; and thinks, probably, that he believes in him; and is confident that he knows him. But in a Christian country the name of Christ is a mere synonyme of God or supposed truth; and the professor's bare profession of belief in Christ is a mere parallel of a heathen's profession of belief in *God* or in a deity. The heathen (provided he be not a polytheist, and even though he *be* one) can scarcely be made to comprehend how it can be that he does not believe in the true God: nor can a professor of Christ easily comprehend the possibility of its not being the *true* Christ whom he believes. He may easily be persuaded to acknowledge, and even to think, that he is very defective in the knowledge of Christ and of his will; that he does not live obediently to him; or that he does not love him as he ought. But that he is ignorant of him, so as not to know him, he will strenuously deny; just as the heathen will strenuously assert that it is the *true* God whom he *professes* to believe. For, truly, every body *professes* to believe the *true* God: but, truly, it is not the *true* God whom every body professes to believe. In the same way, every professing Christian now-a-days acknowledges the *apostolic* authority; but just as a confidently professing Christian may orally profess Christ, and yet may virtually deny him, so may he virtually deny the *apostolic* authority, which, nevertheless, he verbally and confidently acknowledges. Thus it is that Antichrist *denies Christ and the authority of the Apostles*, of whom Christ declared—"He that heareth not *you*, heareth not *me*; and he that heareth not *me*, heareth not *the Father* that sent *me*:" just as he had said, "he that heareth my words and *doeth* them, he it is that *loveth* me." And thus it is that Antichrist denieth *the Father and the Son*: for, he denies *the Apostles* who were sent by *the Son*, who was sent by *the Father*: according to Christ's declaration, "*as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*"

Again the same Apostle John (whose *Epistles* must needs be supposed to contain much unfigurative doctrine expository of the spurious Christianity figuratively depicted in his Apocalypse) says, "now is the last time" (or the period of God's "last dispensation or revelation of his will"): "and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, so even now are there

"many Antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time. "They went out *from us*; but they were not *of us*: for if they had been *of us*, they would have continued *with us*; but they went out, that they might be manifest they were none of them of *us*: or, as the Apostle Paul says, "There must needs be heresies, that those who are of the truth may be *manifested*." The Apostle John proceeds: "Ye know that *no lie is of the truth*: who is a liar but he that *denieth* that Jesus is the Messiah?" that is, he is a liar, who by a manifest disregard of Christ's word *believes* his own profession of belief, and thus declares his unbelief that, "Jesus is the anointed king of Israel;" or who, in other words, "denies that Messiah has come in the human nature, i.e., in the flesh." "*He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son.*" Surely, these are subjects of serious reflection for all the professors of popular Christianity, and especially for those who think that the spiritual kingdom of Christ is to be supported and ruled by the authority of temporal power or the civil government of states, whose divine authority reaches only to *civil* affairs.

Now, innumerable and infinitely various are the forms of false profession; and infinitely various are the modes in which the natural mind manifests itself, and so *denies* Christ, or *believes* a profession of truth. But intolerance of apostolic authority and insubordination to, or perversion of, divine apostolic institution, and addiction to human policy, prudence, and discretion in religious affairs, are necessarily common to them all. Thus ever was, and ever will be characterized the profession of faith that wants the principle of obedience, or the conviction of truth. Ignorance of God's word, that is, of the true meaning and intent of God's word, must necessarily mark the conduct and dictate the notions of any man whose "heart is not right in the sight of God," that is, who does not really believe and therefore cannot confidently trust his word. For the spirit of faith is the spirit of obedience; and the spirit of obedience is the spirit of interpretation; there is no other interpreter. Now, *the fear* of God, and *the love* of the brethren, are the themes of every precept and institution delivered by the Apostles. How then *should these precepts* and institutions be understood by the man *whose mind is a stranger* to the fundamental principle of filial fear

and brotherly love? It never was the design of God that his word should be understood by those who could not possibly be influenced by the principle of obeying it, viz. a godly fear urging compliance with his word. Undoubtedly it was his purpose that his word should be an impenetrable mystery, an insuperable difficulty, an insoluble enigma, to all except disciples: or, as John, in apocalyptic language, says of disciples—"the song they sang could no man learn, but he that was of their number." And thus were disciples to be *for ever* distinguished and separated from false professors. It is therefore evident that there always was, and ever will be "*a necessity that heresies should arise, and should for ever exist,*" in order, "that those who are of the truth might in all ages be manifested." In primitive or apostolic days, when Christianity was *a sect*, heresy was a departure from *apostolic* truth and obedience: in *modern* days when Christianity is *the world*, a return to apostolic obedience is heresy. It was, and still is, necessary that false professors should leave the company of true disciples, or, rather, that true professors should leave the religious association of false professors. It was necessary, from the first days of the church, that unbelief or false profession should develop itself in *a system* of disobedience; in order that false, flourishing, popular, and triumphant Christianity should carry with it "*its own*" ungodly "*world*:" and that *the world* might indulge its delusions remote from the sect of disciples. Wanting the true principle of interpretation of God's word (viz., *the fear of God and the love of the brethren*) the false professor will wander for ever through the pages of God's word as over the ocean without a compass; "ever learning, and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth." And in the absence of the true principle, yet conceiving of course that he possesses it, he will adopt some other principle as a substitute for it; and will therefore *necessarily* resort to the suggestions of human prudence dictated by the most approved and amiable principles of the natural human mind. Conceiving that the affections of the heart are the only sincere motives of obedience and the only true principles of moral action, he will, with the most generous feelings of our unregenerate nature, *interpret the moral precepts of the New Testament, which are*

addressed only to disciples, *by the common natural principles of humanity, instead of the spiritual and intellectual principle of the love of the brethren, which is but the love and fear or belief of God.* “By this we know that *we love the children of God,—* “when we love God, and keep his commandments” (1 John 5 : 2, “3): “and *this is his commandment, that we should believe in* “the name of his son Jesus Christ, and love one another as he “gave us commandment, even the new commandment to love “one another.” (1 John, 2 : 23.) How *could* such a man act otherwise; seeing that his very judgment is spiritually uninformed by scriptural principle? How *could* he love the brethren, while he loves not (for he *knows not*) God? Whereas it is a *principle*, founded in the nature of things respectively spiritual or natural, that “whosoever loveth him that begat, loveth also him that is begotten of him.” But this love of God is an *intellectual and informed principle*; and not an *operation of the passions or natural affections*. The love of the brethren, like the love of God whereon it is founded, is a *principle*, and not a *passion*: it is seated in the *understanding*, enlightened to the belief of God’s word and the *intellectual* desire of conforming with it. It is not *physiologically possible* that two conflicting affections should naturally or after the manner of *passion or the natural affections* exist, in well matched rivalry, together: but one of the minds’ two motives (the superior) *must be* the dictation of an *intellectual or moral and spiritual principle*: while the other (the inferior) is the impulse of *passion*, and is of the *natural affections*. And hence it came to pass at length, that religious men unacquainted with God’s truth and their own unchangeable nature, and regardless also of the instruction contained in God’s word,—and finding by experience their utter want of success in the vain attempt “to make that straight, which God has made crooked,”—endeavoured to achieve the conquest of themselves, and to extirpate their rebellious passions in the various absurdities of monastic life,—a life professedly, but feebly, opposed to the two prevailing *appetites* of all animal beings. Contrarily to all this, the very *principles and affections* of the false professor must necessarily prompt him to seek a system of christianity wherein *he, and the many like him, may satisfactorily repose; and*

wherein the many may, by the mutual countenance of numbers, persuade themselves that truth is on the side of the great majority, and that *the many* must be the church of Christ ; in plain contradiction of Christ's declaration that *many* travel the road of error, but *few* the path of life. And as we have no reason whatever to suppose that the world was, during the apostolic age, or ever will be at any future period, differently constituted in mind and natural principles from those of the present race of men,—we are led to suspect, and indeed to know, that in primitive days, as soon as ever professors became considerably multiplied, the majority of them, like the majority of the present day, were men who endured, very uneasily, the apostolic regimen ; and who therefore could relish only a christianity more accommodated than was the apostolic rule, to their convenience, principles, and genius. On very various accounts therefore the “many would be offended.” Many, as they came to hear the doctrine of grace more largely expounded and frequently abused, would take *moral* offence, and conscientiously, though erroneously, deem the doctrine libertine. Many, as they came to hear the doctrine of good works legitimately expounded and enforced, would take *religious* offence, deeming the doctrine degenerated from true spirituality, and an encroachment on the privileges of the elect. Many would favour *Jewish* prejudice ; “condemning” such Gentile converts as refused to adopt Jewish distinctions of days and meats, of clean and unclean, holy and common. Many would “despise” the Jewish disciples who observed, and were at that period bound to observe, the as yet unabolished Mosaic obligations : and would deem their very numerous and widely scattered Jewish brethren to be engaged in observances incompatible with the Christian hope, and consequently subversive of the truth ; though these observances were imperative upon *all Jews* so long as the Mosaic dispensation subsisted, that is till *God himself who instituted it, should signify its termination by the utter destruction of the temple and Jewish state, and by the dispersion of the nation, according to the signs specified by the Lord Jesus concerning this very subject, viz., “the end of the age” or Mosaic dispensation.* Many would deem the authority of *the apostles to be an usurpation over the christian liberties and*

equal privileges of the brethren ; and would deem the apostolic institutions (however suitable in their opinion to the infancy of the church) to be arbitrary, temporary, and of minor importance ; and in many respects but ill-adapted to the exigencies likely and certain to arise out of the varieties of national genius, customs, and habits prevalent in different countries and distant ages of the world. They would, therefore, very naturally conclude the apostolic institutions to be unsuitable to the predicaments of the church as it increased in numbers, reputation, experience, knowledge, and civil influence. But perhaps above all, and in conjunction with all other motives, a strong and emulous disposition would prevail, to raise the credit and glory of the new system by proselytism and the conquest of paganism, and thus to lessen the reproach of the cross. Which very natural but corrupt feeling would infallibly tend to the introduction of worldly principles into the associations of Christians ; and to a concurrent disrelish of those apostolic ordinances which were instituted most obviously for the very purpose of reminding disciples of their principles and professions,—of protecting the association against the insidious encroachments of worldly practices and principles,—and of excluding human policy. Let us but reflect that the then world at large wore loosely their pagan persuasion. Few or none had any intellectual conviction of the truth of the fables they professed. Many loathed in their hearts “the husks that the swine did eat :” and all rational men would readily have adopted any faith that would have delivered them from the gross absurdities of the popular religion, and that contained the elements of reason ; *provided only that it were not obnoxious to their moral and prudential notions and social convenience.* As soon as ever, therefore, the number of professors of the Christian name became considerable, the uncompliant authority of the Apostles, the purity of their doctrine, and the uncompromising strictness of their moral and spiritual precepts, must have presented a palpable inconvenience and obstacle to the views of all those professors who adhered to the Christian name merely because they were ashamed or tired of paganism ; *and of all who, being mainly interested for the name and credit of the new religion, or hoping by the acquisition of numbers to*

lessen the reproach of the cross, were desirous of propagating extensively their adopted persuasion. These would even gladly have accommodated the prudential opinions, feeble morals, heathen prejudices, and inveterate habits of any whose adhesion would bring respectability and shed a lustre upon the general cause. Such and many other causes must, even during the Apostles' lives, have operated with many professors to the disrelish, discredit, question, and disregard of the apostolic authority; and *must* speedily have tended to the rejection of their persons, or (what was virtually the same thing) to the reverence and acknowledgment of more acceptable and reputable leaders. An observation made by Paul to this effect must eminently have applied to all the rest of the Apostles, viz. : God had purposely chosen very humble and insignificant instruments to publish his truth and to enforce his precepts. He did not employ the learned, the eloquent, and the admired. The persons selected by him for the occasion were mean men. It was not by force of words that conviction was conquered : the powers of speech exhibited by the first publishers of the gospel were "contemptible." The instruments were despicable, "in order that the power might appear plainly to be of God, and not of man." In respect, therefore, of personal influence, the Apostles were, doubtless, far inferior to many of their converts. Indeed, the Apostles did, for this very purpose, abstain from all attempts at "excellency of speech and moral philosophy." And so, when the companies of professors came to be multiplied, and the churches populous, we may be certain that all those who were not effectually influenced by a true conviction of the truth of God's revelation of himself by Jesus Christ, were far more disposed to listen to men of worldly and personal accomplishments than to the illiterate and personally unattractive Apostles ; whose national peculiarities and character must have increased the unfavourable and Gentile prejudice. Many, therefore, of the new professors were discontented with the apostolic presidency ; and leaders or (according to modern phrase) popular preachers were readily supplied. For, men generally and naturally "love pre-eminence;" and not the less so men in the humbler ranks of society. Doctrines more accordant with men's natural con-

ceptions were subsequently broached by philosophic and learned ingenuity, and the many simple were captivated. Fervour does not speedily cool, nor are the fervid easily abashed, in an age of enthusiasm, the day of new religious impressions. Ambition will not be balked, nor fallacy submit to disappointment, while persistence of effort can hope for the accomplishment of project. As soon as ever, then, the heretics or leaders of these schismatically disposed numbers had once succeeded in "carrying off" (*αἶρω*) the many unsound members of the various christian bodies, and had established this majority and themselves in rival associations and apostleships, it is impossible that they should not soon have borne away the palm of christian notoriety from the Apostles and their unpretending adherents. These leaders are "the false Apostles" mentioned and often alluded to in the apostolic writings, and especially in their later writings. And I repeat, that, having now extricated Christianity from the unconceding power of apostolic authority, and having established it on principles accommodated to the wisdom, taste, religious principles, moral necessities, and complicated interests of *the world*, and the most approved notions of the natural mind, they, together with their followers, must have borne away the palm of popularity, i.e. they must have satisfied the requisitions of the most approved, prudential, and best principles of the natural human mind and of society ; must consequently have flourished far beyond the attainments of the apostolic company ; must have become numerous and, in the world's estimation, creditable, glorious and consequently *catholic or universal* ; must have thrown the Apostles and their comparatively few adherents into the shade, and even into disfavour and odium ; must eventually have fixed the stigma of heresy upon the unpopular party or disgraced competitor ; must, in the absence of the Apostles, from whose control they were now relieved, and more especially after their decease, *have interpreted in their own favour the apostolic writings, the records of their religion* ; thus arrogating to their own tenets, perversions, corruptions, and usurpations, *the reputation of apostolic sanction and tradition* ; must have interpreted the scriptures favourably to their own views and to the *interests of their numerous and hereditary Apostles, sanctioned,*

as they would naturally contend, *by the authority and memory of their predecessors or departed and venerated saints* ; must have resorted to the support of *oral tradition* to justify their pretensions, departures, or deflections from the written records of the Apostles ; must, in the progress of advancement to universality, have entirely engrossed the rich, the noble, the powerful, and *the many* : and finally must have extinguished from the notice of mankind the contemptibly few who still adhered to the written traditions of the Apostles ; and who, beyond all reasonable doubt, were at length too few and unimportant to be noted by history, even amongst those whose designation and memorial she would deign to perpetuate upon her list of *heretics*. For it is plain that not even any *heresy* whatever could have secured much of the world's notice, attention, or favour—as yet creditable by its moral propriety, and not yet opprobrious by its enormities—unless it had been much calculated by its nature to captivate the natural mind, and so to divide the sentiments of the world. And thus *true or apostolic* Christianity must, as an *historical* subject, have utterly merged in *spurious* Christianity and its varieties. Hence there exists not the slightest reason to doubt that false and flourishing Christianity became orthodox (as the term is) and venerable for its *antiquity* as well as for its *universality*,—unchanged in its *principles*, any further than as it developed itself and perfected its system ;—and from that day to the present has been or might be able *justly* (I doubt not) to appeal to *its own historical records* for an uninterrupted existence from apostolic days, and (in a certain *perverse* sense, but *literally true* one) even for its lineal descent from the Apostles themselves. So entire is my conviction of the absolute, moral, and physiological *necessity* of all those results which I have marked with the imperative term “ must ”—that I do pertinaciously urge upon my reader the moral certainty and argumentative infallibility of my conclusions respecting *an ungodly world exchanging its profession of paganism for the more rational one of Christianity*, such as degenerating Christianity was, before its age of absurdity and enormity. And be it remembered, we are not now contemplating the operation and issue of that substantial truth, or the confession of it, for whose preservation from the prevailing ;

powers of error and malignancy the promise of God was pledged ; but we are speaking of that empty form and unimpregnated conception or mere profession of *the name* of truth, which the common laws of human declivity determine infallibly and un-deviatingly to corruption ; and which the apostolic word of God had decreed absolutely and *promptly* to perversion (Acts 20 ; 29.) That passage of holy writ which declares “ that the gates of hell shall never enclose the church of Christ,” does not declare that any specific congregation or general association or denomination of professors shall be kept *permanently* pure, or that God will continue to regard any company of men as Christ’s church, which has ceased to be a company of *disciples of Christ*.

The reader, however, will most probably feel less confident than I do of “ *the necessity*” which I have in the preceding paragraph, inferentially imputed to the early false Christian associations, and will perhaps deem these conclusions of mine (however probable, because consonant with the nature of man and of human things as we read them in all history, and see them this day with our eyes) to want the support of authority ; and will reasonably ask for some corroboration of them from scripture or from history.

It is, then, a singular felicity that the authenticity of the scriptures and the corruption of Christianity should both of them be clearly demonstrable by their reciprocal evidence and mutual testimony, and that their mutual contrariety should confer upon each of them the most absolute certainty or satisfactory credibility,—as satisfactory and absolute as the nature of the subject admits. For, that Christianity *once* existed in a very different and far purer and less popular condition than it does at present is abundantly proved by the many pages of scripture. And, on the other hand, that the scriptures are *the original and pure documents of Christianity* is plain from the consideration that the various conflicting and even hostile sects of Christianity in all ages *have kept and appealed to these scriptures* as an authority common to them all ; while it is impossible even to conceive that any known christian sect of present or recorded popularity should have forged scriptures so opposite to *the pretensions* or so vacant of plea for the assumptions of them

all. For, the scriptures themselves present the most obvious internal evidence that they were not fabricated by any historically recorded and extinct dissenting sect, nor by any still surviving *catholic, popular, or established* sect, as a sanction for its corrupt institutions ; for, it is by the most arbitrary interpretations, violent perversions, and avowed arrogation of power to change, modify, and dispense with recorded apostolic institutions and primitive practices, that the scriptures have been forced into ill-adjusted compliance with the innovations or morbid necessities of a spurious profession of scripturality, and with the corrupt practices and encroachments of mercenary, ambitious, self-interested and superstitious men. And the very audacity with which certain sects have leaped to their desired conclusions ; the avidity with which they seize upon, and the violence with which they pervert, certain terms and passages of scripture for a pretext to their unfounded institutions ; and the stubborn stupidity with which they suppress or dispense with the most undeniable texts declaratory of apostolic institutions, are a clear proof of *what would have been* the nature of their pious frauds and forgeries, *if it had been but practicable* to impose them on the other vigilant sects. It is therefore impossible not to view *the hostile sects* of corrupt and heretical Christians as the providential purpose of God for supplying to all future ages a reasonable and indeed irrefragable proof of the authenticity of the scriptures. Certainly, corrupt and divided Christianity has ever been the most satisfactory and unimpeachable of all imaginable *keepers* of the apostolic or written records. I will here observe that we have ample reason to know that *all* the apostolic writings (at least all those of Paul) were diligently obtained and reverentially regarded by all the primitive apostolic churches. This is satisfactorily shown by Peter's *general* epistle, wherein he praises "*all the epistles of Paul*," referring to them as to documents universally recognised by the Gentile churches. This consideration renders it improbable that many of the apostolic writings (at least of Paul's writings) have been lost.

"But," say the Roman and Protestant Catholics, "we are the *lineal descendants* of the primitive churches ; our bishops are the *lineal descendants* of Peter and the other Apostles ; our church"

has been the keeper of the apostolic writings ; and this trust or possession and absolute tradition of the oracles of God *is the proof* that we the keepers are the true church of Christ ; and consequently, as the ‘ gates of hell shall never prevail against Christ’s church,’ and since *our church has existed, and is the only church that has existed from apostolic days*, therefore *our church must ever have been, and must ever be*, the true and only church of Christ.” Such are the pretensions of churches claiming to be catholic, and such the argument founded on *catholicity*, that is, on *universality* of space and time.

Now, it is a singular fact, that this boasted *catholicity* is the very mark which the scriptures propose as the criterion of corruption and spurious Christianity. “Woe unto you when *all men shall speak well* of you, for so did your fathers to the *false prophets*.” “The world,” says John, “heareth the *false teachers*, who being imbued with the *principles* of the world, *accommodate their doctrines to its tastes*; and therefore the world approves of them.” (1 John 4 : 5.) *Catholicity*, then, is an unfortunate argument of pretension to truth ; the scriptures declare it to be the badge of error and corruption. “Blessed are ye when men shall persecute and revile you;” therefore persecution or the world’s hatred is an indication rather of fidelity and truth. And if the keeping of the scriptures, which are the oracles of God, be an argument of *churchship*, surely the conflicting sects of Christianity have their share of *evidence* in common with the church of Rome.

But where is that scripture which declares that hell shall not prevail against any specific denomination of associated Christians, or against any local association of professors? The church of Jerusalem, which may justly be viewed as the metropolis of *apostolic authority*, has not always kept its existence. The church of Antioch, where disciples were first called Christians, has not always maintained a vitality recognizable by the historian. At least it may fairly be averred, that if the existence of a church of Christ can be imputed to these places at every period of the christian era, it would be impossible to refuse the claim to any such pretension whatsoever. The churches of Asia, of Corinth, Galatia, Thessalonica, Macedonia, have all suffered desolation and, at least, temporary obliteration. As

well might it be asserted that the Mosaic dispensation subsisted in Judea during the whole period of the captivity of the twelve tribes. Where is the declaration of scripture promising perpetuity to the churches of Rome, Paris, or Constantinople? The church of *Christ*, indeed, is pronounced to be imperishable; yet not in that sense which supposes the necessary existence, at any particular period, of an absolute or visible association of disciples; for, "*when the son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*" There is no scripture pronouncing the church of Rome or any other specific church to be permanently synonymous expressions with the church of Christ.

Must we then conclude that the church of Christ in Jerusalem or elsewhere has been *transferred* to and *permanently* fixed in Rome, or perhaps (on the supposition that Rome herself might be overwhelmed and obliterated by some infidel power) elsewhere? But what proof have we of this transfer? For, no scripture, not even the Epistle to the Romans, wherein one might have expected a hint of such a divine purpose, mentions nor even hints it. The only proof vouchsafed is *Romes own assertion*. Now, "the witness of one who alone bears witness of himself is not true;" another witness, even *the Father or his holy spirit (the scriptures)* is still wanting.

But Rome asserts that there exists another evidence of her truth, viz., that she, and she exclusively, has had the keeping of the scripture—"the oracles of God;" and that unless we admit *her* to have had that trust divinely reposed in her, we have no certain assurance of the true scriptures having been preserved, nor that the reputed scriptures are the true ones, and if we do admit her to have been and to be the repository of this trust, we thereby recognize her claim of being the true church of Christ. Thus, then, we find the church of Rome involved in that species of subtle and vicious demonstration which logicians call "arguing in a circle." She would fain refer to *the scriptures* for her prescriptive authority and exclusive title to truth; and she would refer the truth and genuineness of the scriptures to *her keeping and authority*. Yet surely the most satisfactory keepers of the scriptures have been *the enemies* of their real truth: and the *utterness of the satisfaction* consists obviously in the *enmity*.

There can be no stronger evidence of the genuineness of any record than the fact of that record being opposed to the pretensions of its keeper. *The mere possession of the title deeds of an estate would be the strongest possible evidence against the claim of the possessor of the estate and title-deeds, and in favour of a new claimant's title, if the terms of the title-deeds repudiated the possessor's claim, and acquiesced in the claim of the new claimant of the estate :* for, by all the rules of evidence, such a possession of such records would be satisfactory and conclusive of their genuineness. Are not the Jews, and have they not ever been, even since the establishment of Christianity, satisfactory keepers of the Old Testament ?

It is, then, a circumstance of great and singular felicity, that *the spuriousness of all the catholic churches, and the genuineness of the reputed scriptures, are each satisfactorily and fully corroborative of the other.* Far am I from saying that the authenticity of the scriptures is dependent solely on the fidelity of any or of all their keepers. The false churches were providentially intended to be preservers of the genuine scriptures : just as the emperor Vespasian, Genseric king of the Vandals in Africa, and Justinian emperor of Constantinople, were safe and credible keepers of the holy vessels of the Temple of Jerusalem, which had formerly been kept by the Persian and Assyrian monarchs ; and were undoubtedly (some of them) the genuine and authentic workmanship of Solomon the son of David, and perhaps of Moses. And in like manner, the scriptures thus kept by the false churches, were, by the spirit and providence of God, intended for a perpetual exposure of the corruptions of false profession.

I do not, however, at all mean to assert that *the truth or veraciousness* of the genuine scriptures is, in any degree, thus proved, or insinuated, or even rendered probable. I merely assert that their *genuineness or authenticity* is thus fully and satisfactorily corroborated : and that, proportioned to our conviction of *the genuineness* of the scriptures, is the reasonableness of our conviction of *the spuriousness* of the catholic and of all other false churches. *The truth and divine authority of the scriptures are inferrible from far other premises, which it would*

be foreign to the purposes of these pages minutely to discuss. The true scriptures are but the *written* tradition of what was once an *oral* tradition: and as the oral narrative, though true, was most easily susceptible of disbelief: so the written narrative, though acknowledged to be the genuine tradition of the oral, is as easily disbelieved.

For these reasons, *not all and every* scripture recognised by a catholic church must needs be of divine authority: nor yet must all of them necessarily be considered genuine: nor must *every* divinely inspired writing necessarily have been *preserved and transmitted* to posterity. Of the true and divinely inspired scriptures some *may* have been lost: and of scriptures popularly received as divinely inspired, some may be neither divinely inspired nor genuine. Let us not forget that the truth of the true scriptures is not conclusive from the authority of their keepers, though the keeping be ever so certain. Nevertheless, the true scriptures are not the less true for having been kept by the enemies of truth: rather their genuineness is thereby corroborated. If an ancient parchment were to be dug out of some ruin at Corinth, purporting to be the "former epistle" alluded to in Paul's *first* epistle to the Corinthians,—I conceive that an instructed disciple would have little difficulty in determining the question of its genuineness: as little indeed as he has in determining the spuriousness of certain compositions now asserted to be the genuine writings of the Apostles. Or if some ancient manuscript were to be dug up at Rome, purporting to be the original or a copy of the apostolic epistle to the Romans: and if the manuscript contained some variation of reading from the epistle now universally received:—I feel equally confident that an experienced disciple would be little puzzled to decide which of the two was the more correct or genuine. The gift of "*the discernment of spirits*" (that is, *of the conformity of doctrine with the principles of truth and with the practice and precepts of the Apostles*) would suffice to determine also the genuineness or the spuriousness of a new-found record purporting to be an apostolic production. "The discernment of spirits" was not at all a miraculous gift. The perception of *truth*, or the belief and knowledge of the truth of *scripture*, involves of course *the discernment* of the true scriptures.

Belief of divinely revealed truth is that reasonable and simple function of our intellectual faculties when engaged upon the word of revelation, which the holy spirit alone gives the mind really and effectually to perform. And the same enlightened faculty which enables a sincere and diligent enquirer to discover *what is true*, suffices necessarily for the discernment of *what is false and spurious*. That "unction from the holy one which teaches all truth," teaches also "*to know that no lie is of the truth.*" in other words, it teaches to distinguish what is truth, and what is error; what the wisdom and revelation of God; and what the wisdom and *invention* of men. If a forged manuscript, put forward as a discovered antiquity, were to contain no difference, or merely an insignificant one, from the copies now in use,—then a disciple's power of "discerning spirits" would not be called into requisition. The forgeries would, in no respect, differ from the copies made at this day by a printer, who may very possibly be a Mahometan, and very probably a deist.

An infidel at the present day may very honestly doubt *the truth* of Christianity; for, it was doubted and rejected by eye-witnesses and hearers of Christ and his Apostles. But not even an infidel can offer a reason for doubting *the authenticity* of the Apostolic writings.

As for *history*, I have already shown the impossibility of its having put upon record the existence of a specific and totally eclipse *apostolic* sect at a time when other sects bearing the same name engrossed all the praise, popularity, and odium of the christian name. And consequently, the great and flourishing heresies must have furnished the only popular approved histories of early Christian transactions; and must have left the writings of the rejected sects to perish in their unpopularity and discredit. The popularly approved historians must, of course, have represented their own heresy as the only orthodox Christianity; and *their* representation of early times must have been transmitted as the correct one to all succeeding generations.*

* Philip de Comines, at a period when all men were papists, gravely mentions that Louis the Eleventh, during a fit of sickness, sent to the Pope for the vestments in which St. Peter sang mass. The Pope sent them! Now, this was one of the traditions of orthodox Christianity: what reason have we for concluding that the rest of traditional Christianity was better

For all these reasons, it is evident that the scriptures alone can reasonably be expected to furnish historical evidence to the truth of my assertions respecting the *early* unpopularity and obscurity of the *apostolic* sect. Let the reader, then, candidly examine the body of proof which the scriptures themselves abound in, declaratory of the departures and popularity of false Christianity even during the Apostles' lives. He will find it impossible to deny my conclusions. The apostolic writings will thus be seen to possess all the virtue of autobiography or the history of *apostolic or discipular obedience*, pursuing its narrative down to the last stage of the writer's existence, though necessarily wanting the concluding scene of life's utter extinction.

We learn from the declarations of the Apostle John, and also from various observations scattered up and down the apostolic writings, that a great apostacy or falling away from apostolic institution was to occur, and speedily too. From the same authorities we learn that many professors of Christianity did not, even at the date of these epistles, recognise the Apostles; and that they had even voluntarily separated from their communion: not having been *put out*; but having *gone out*, from the company of disciples. The complaints, earnest exhortations, and solemn warnings of the Apostles on this very subject are proofs in point. Three only, of the Apostle John's epistles, have come down to us. In one of them he declares that a leader of professors, ambitious of eminence, had disclaimed him, and had even renounced fellowship with any that persisted still to acknowledge the Apostle. Now, it is evident that this was not a casual instance of refractoriness: it was manifestly the contemptuous deportment of one who had acquired an ascendancy over a competitor; and who on principle justified his usurpation, and had gained the church to his views, that is, to a renunciation of the Apostle John; and consequently, of all the Apostles; for, I presume, no other Apostle could have been found to abet the renunciation. Let us here pause to reflect what must have been the state of a church which could on founded; and by what argument and appeal shall this tradition be confuted? Surely it is not its ridiculousness that betrays it, for ridiculousness is a matter of mere taste and opinion. Multitudes admired the tradition. Are the gravest traditions better warranted, and how?

principle have been induced to sanction or even to acquiesce in the rejection of men from their association for no other cause than that of adhering to the Apostle John ! Is it reasonable to suppose that this was a solitary and unparalleled instance of the operation of devout, worldly, powerful, ambitious, avaricious, and *universally operating* principles ? Were the rest of the then professing world so universally unlike this recorded portion of it, as to render it improbable or even uncertain that there were many such departures ? Do the Apostle John's other epistles, or the writings of the other Apostles, render the suspicion an extravagant one, or even doubtful ? It appears that there were few in that church who would have received the Apostle or his messengers : for, his language does not imply that many were cast out. The second or shortest epistle of John is evidently written for the sole purpose of warning the church (which is addressed under the figure of "an elect lady and her children") against "the many deceivers who had entered into the world," and who, not acknowledging the veritable apostolic rule of Christ's Kingdom, were the deceptive spirit of Antichrist. He therefore exhorts this lady's *children* not to receive the false teachers into *their* house (the church) nor to countenance them ("bid them God speed.") And he concludes this epistle with a salutation from "a sister church" to the church which he then addressed. Another and long epistle of John is occupied largely, indeed chiefly with warnings against false teachers ; and takes notice of their having "separated themselves" from the communion of the Apostles and their adherents. And that these separatists were *even then* the popular and prevailing Christianity, is evident from John's declaration that the false teachers, "being of the world," did "therefore speak of," or in accordance with the notions and tastes of *the world*, and that "for this reason *the world* heareth them." Can any thing be plainer than that the term "*the world*" is here applied to *the vast majority* of professing christians, and in opposition to *true disciples* ;—the many to the few ? And does not the Apostle's declaration inform us that *the many* adhered to the false teachers and *the few* to the apostles ? Be it noted also that this epistle *was not* addressed to any particular church or individual ; but,

as its title declares, to disciples generally or universally. Therefore, in this epistle the Apostle declares the *universal* defection of the churches; and furnishes disciples universally with a rule for the detection of *false teachers universally*: a rule which none but disciples will fully comprehend, because its utter simplicity cannot be tortured into adaptation to worldly principles. (1 John 4: 1—6) So also the second, and indeed the first, epistle of Peter, and the epistle of Jude, are written expressly and solely to guard the brethren against the false teachers and professors; and to enable disciples to discover their character by their doctrines. (2 Pet. chap. 2 and 3: especially 2 Pet. 3: 1, 2.—Jude, verse 4, &c.) How often do we find the Apostle Paul obliged to urge with his utmost force of argument, his divine authority or apostolic commission and power over the churches! Surely his apostleship would never have been thus defensively asserted, unless it had been periled by question and attack. The readers of Paul's writings do not generally contemplate the grammatical and necessary import of his words, when he mournfully complains that "all they in Asia" (the churches which he and Barnabas planted and established in the observance of the apostolic Ordinances and Institutions of Christ's Kingdom) "had turned away from him:" that is, they had renounced, *not* the name of Christ, but *his*, *Paul's*, *apostolic authority and precepts*. Nor have we any reason whatever from scripture for supposing that these churches ever again returned to him.* For "he was *then* ready to be offered; and

* To this remark may be objected the Apostle John's address, long after Paul's death, "to the seven churches which are in *Asia*." To which objection I should reply, that my remark made above in the text, does not at all suppose that every individual christian resident in those places where the churches had turned away from Paul, was included in the Apostles complaint; nor that other individuals had from time to time, been added to the number of the comparatively very few professors who adhered to the apostolic cause at the period of general defection complained of by Paul in his second epistle to Timothy. I conclude indeed that perversion and corruption of principle marked the general and popular christianity in Asia and all other places: viz. *the natural religion*, or an adaptation of christian doctrines, topics, and terms to men's natural conceptions and tastes: which natural and spurious christianity accommodated itself to the religious prejudices of the natural human mind, and regulated itself by the prudential and best policy of human sagacity as it operates in worldly and civil affairs. Though, therefore, it became at once *perverted in principle*, it is not necessary to suppose that it became at once

the time of his departure was at hand." (2 Tim. 1 : 15 and 4, 5) and he himself informs us that his departure was to be the prelude of total corruption, and of perversion of truth by the Bishops (Acts 20 : 28, 29, 30). And when we reflect that even a chief amongst the Apostles was, on one occasion, carried away by public opinion and popular prejudice, and was induced to countenance a great aberration from true principle; and as we may be certain that there existed at that day, just as there exists at the present day, a vast deal of devout, religious, and conscientious sentiment on the side of error, which passed current then, as it does now, for spiritual-mindedness; we may be sure that the temptation to think disparagingly of the apostolic supremacy, and of its absolute and exclusive authority, or (which

utterly corrupt in moral practice. We can even conceive that enthusiasm and fanaticism exaggerated the obligations of professors. We know by abundant experience that the spirit of martyrdom is not at all confined to the advocates of truth; but has often and even largely been vauntingly displayed by bigots and fanatics of all christian denominations. And thus we may easily conceive that the pretensions and convictions of the popular persuasion were eminently calculated to furnish heroic examples of fortitude, and to call forth the various sentiments that can induce men even to provoke, court and create the occasions of self-devotion (1 Cor. 13 : 3). The same popular Christianity, having eclipsed the less ostentatious sect of apostolic disciples, must necessarily in that day, as at the present and all future times, have condemned those *principles* which stand opposed to conformity with public persuasion, and will ever insure the popular aversion to the few. The many will ever charge the few with heresy; not reflecting that the many were primitively the heretics, and the few were then the orthodox. Again: it is but reasonable to conclude that the apocalyptic record of the degenerate state of many of the churches that still adhered to the apostle, is at least a fair criterion of the state of Christianity generally at the same period in all other places. The language of these apocalyptic addresses is sufficiently figurative to enable a litigant to dispute the meaning of the terms. But as it is only the candid that I appeal to, or over whom I could hope to prevail, I would appeal to candour itself whether any other interpretation can be assigned to these addresses than that the general state of Christianity was a state of degeneracy fearfully significant of extinction. To my apprehension they represent the existence of a rival church in all of the cities; a rival triumphantly bearing the palm of notoriety and public approbation. From all *excess of moral depravity* the public gaze must as yet have effectually or at least sufficiently preserved the popular Christianity which I am contemplating. But the vicious *principle* of moral as well as of spiritual corruption and future enormity existed even at that primitive day; as is notoriously evident by the recorded testimonies of the apostles themselves, John, Paul, Peter, and Jude, and, I may add, of James also.

Now, it must be admitted that neither do these seven epistles, nor yet any other of the apostolic writings, furnish us with any direct nor even *probable* evidence whereby to calculate the proportional numbers of the *heretical* and of the apostolic professors of Christianity. The apostles and

is the same thing) "to think more highly of men who were *not* Apostles, than we ought to think, or to think of them above the apostolic scriptures, or *above that which is written*," was very urgent. At Rome, where we learn from the epistle to that church (and which, by-the-by, contains not the most distant allusion to the claims now arrogated by her) that the Jewish and Gentile converts were little inclined to tolerate the differences of obligation arising out of their respective predicaments of circumcision and uncircumcision, we may be sure that the Apostle Paul's lessons, urging on both classes of disciples a recognition of each other's distinct and divine obligations to their respective observances and non-observances, were soon forgotten and obliterated. And as, in all countries where the christian doc-

course regarded none of all those circumstances (such as wealth, learning, numbers, &c.) which, according to men's general estimation, confer credit and lustre upon the religious associations of the world. Their attention, praise, and rebuke were directed solely to those (however humble and few) who still maintained their *principle* of obedience to God's instituted authorities and written word. And as history can afford no light to the subject, viz. *the comparative numbers* of those who really were, and of those who said they were "true disciples;" we are left to answer the question of comparative numbers, by a reference to the necessary operation of the laws of human nature, to the known principles, motives, and necessities, that determine the judgment and practice of universal man, and to the general issue which all history and the present state and influence of religion over all the world have undeniably assigned as the natural and necessary results from the operation of these known causes. But the apostolic scriptures generally, including John's epistles to the seven churches, vividly describe the feeble and even expiring state of *true* Christianity, and the rapid progress of the predicted Apostacy, even during the life-time and in the neighbourhood of the sole surviving and very principal Apostle; at a time too when nominal Christianity, according to her own report and the report of all history, was flourishing and making rapid strides to the very subversion and extinction of paganism. Pliny, in a letter to the emperor Trajan, written at a time not distant from the period of John's writing the Revelation, declares that in his district of Asia Minor, few persons were left to purchase the sacrifices of the pagan temples. To what degree then of departure and popularity must spurious Christianity have attained in the next and succeeding generations; and what degree of publicity and notoriety could *truth* have presented during all this time to the views of the historian: whose narrative of religious affairs must necessarily have been engrossed upon incidents of general attention, celebrity, and popular interest. And when finally Christianity had subverted paganism, what must have been the character of the great contending factions that disputed, persecuted each other, fought and bled for *orthodoxy*, even in the churches, contending for spiritual empire and monopoly? Could it possibly have been apostolic truth?

According to this view, it is evident that spurious and popular Christianity is as old as the Apostles; and may easily be seen to have been transmitted from primitive days to the present time without any variation

trine was planted, and had superseded the pagan worship, that form of Christianity must have been most acceptable, prevalent, and of best repute, which accorded with men's natural and prudential notions, we may be certain that history has transmitted little or nothing concerning those few disciples who adhered to the general rule and precedent of apostolic authority; and that their transactions, if at all mentioned in history, are merely alluded to in the misrepresentations of writers belonging to the more approved and popular persuasions; who, of course stigmatize all the rest as the advocates of heresies and preposterous tenets. While at the same time, of course, the spurious and prevalent Christianity became more and more widely diffused; acquiring mankind's veneration as it gathered antiquity;

of *principle*, and with no other variation even of form and features, than that of development and occasional reformation. From excess of moral depravity it must as yet have been preserved by the public gaze of pagan censors and persecutors: but the vicious *principle* of moral corruption and future *spiritual* enormity existed under the christian profession and amongst men of the sincerest, and most devout, moral, and religious principles *at that very day*; even according to the recorded testimony of all the Apostles. Subsequently, no doubt, when the Apostles were all dead and gone, the heaven affected the whole mass. "In the abounding prevalence of iniquity, the love of the many became stone cold." Eventually, doubtless, the principles even of the small apostolic companies gave way: for as the veterans died off, the ranks were but ill-recruited from a world infatuated with the strong delusions of religious enthusiasm, fanaticism and bigotry. And of course not a vestige of apostolic conformity is to be found amongst the world's own records of Christianity; which records, even if they alluded to a sect still maintaining the practice of obedience, would notice it only in terms of exaggerated and even false imputation. Nor probably did there exist finally on the face of the earth *a single disciple fully instructed in apostolic practice*. True discipleship itself,—that is, *the principle of implicit obedience to the institutions of the holy spirit speaking by its organs the Apostles*,—can scarcely be conceived to have preserved, after a generation or two of disuse, more than an obscure tradition of the obsolete constitution and practices of the primitive churches; and only clouded views of the evil principle of the modern departure from ancient practice, or, rather, of *the scriptural record* of apostolic precedent. Even where the *principle* of obedience existed, *the practice* must have been defective on account of the obscurity attending obsolescence; for as the apostolic customs became obsolete, the very memory and tradition of them must have died in an age when written documents were scarce, and the knowledge of them could have been collected, as at the present day, from scripture alone, laboriously and slowly; like a skein unravelled by the hand of patience, or like the subterranean ruins of a city detected amongst the rubbish of an overwhelming volcanic eruption. Quære, is there at the present day such a fully instructed disciple; or have the streets of the holy city been yet all excavated? The principle of obedience, *viz. the love of God, and the love of brethren* must dictate the interpretation of the *scriptural records*, from whence alone the city can ever be fully restored.

and was deemed to be, as no doubt it was, coeval with the Apostles; and as (if judged by the Apostles' own writings) no doubt *it was not*, a legitimate transmission from the Apostles themselves.

From the data, then, furnished by the epistles of John, and from the writings of the other Apostles, or of persons sanctioned or employed by them, we must gather what that *principle* is, which, under the profession of truth, is yet opposed to it; which, acknowledging Christ, is yet Antichrist.

That the antichristian principle operating even during the Apostles' lives, was, at a future time, to develop itself enormously, will be readily granted. Time, even a long time was requisite, before the frowardness of infancy should grow into the crime of maturity; and the child of heresy become that man of sin, who, "exalting himself above the supreme civil magistrate, or above all that is *called* God or that is worshipped" (reverenced) should in every country which professed the faith of Christ, establish his pretensions: "so that he, as God," (God's providential representative or minister of *civil* affairs) "sitting in the temple of God," (claiming divine authority in *spiritual* affairs) should arrogate the right to dictate the faith and religious practice of Christians, and to force compliance with his religious ordinances. But the mystery of iniquity existed *in principle* when the Apostle Paul wrote, and was already working. And it is the principle, as it then operated, constituting the essential spirit and evil nature of Antichrist, and not his subsequent excesses, which the disciple will study with most profit. The man who now-a-days knows the first principles of truth, as it is revealed in Jesus Christ, (however slow he may be, and dull of understanding in respect of the things of the kingdom of heaven) is probably in little danger of seeking unequivocally at the hands of a priest or any other person arrogating the functions of a priest,—for the administration of God's pardon, and for the dispensation of his favours. But error is as insidious, various, and pertinacious as truth is simple and unchangeable. And as in former days this principle of error was long brooding ere its full-fledged conclusions took wing; so now *at the present day* may the principle of error still subsist in

operation, though some of its most monstrous consequences have been exposed and its grossest corruptions reformed: or even *though it should be utterly stripped of everything obnoxious to men's moral feelings, and should thereby be restored to its simple and original state of primitive divergence from apostolic practice and precept.* Concerning *the principle* of error, we may be assured, that, such as it first deviated, so will it ever oppose return; and the same blindness that lost the path will never discover it again. Of some of the grosser corruptions of Antichrist there may easily be—and from all of them there might possibly be—a reformation; but from the fundamental error of the apostacy there never can be a sincere and effectual conversion, except in the mind that is instructed to see the principle of error and the point of aberration from scriptural truth.

Let us see, then, if this subtle essence of disobedience can be subjected to the touch; and a spirit so impalpable be embodied or defined by the help of the Apostle's own definitions.

He tells us that "Antichrist confesseth not that Jesus the Messiah is come in the human person." The Apostle does not say "*professeth not,*" but "*confesseth not.*" The Antichrists or false Christian teachers of the Apostle's time, doubtless *professed* Jesus: but they did not *confess* him: their practice was, in some way or other, a virtual denial of their words. "In words they acknowledged, in works they denied Christ." "They are *of the world*: therefore speak they *of the world*; and therefore *the world* heareth them: we (the Apostles) are *of God*: they that know God hear us: they that are not *of God*, do not hear us. "Hereby we *distinguish the spirit of truth from the spirit of error.*" Let this definition of Antichrist by the Apostle John be compared with Christ's declarations to the Apostle: "he that heareth not *you*, heareth not *me*; and he that heareth not *me*, heareth not *the father* that sent me." We are, then, to understand three things: first, that the spirit of Antichrist accords with the approved notions of the world; the world, in return, approving the spirit thus ministering to its prepossessions and prudential policy. Secondly, that they who hear not the Apostles, do not *confess that Jesus the Messiah is come in the human nature and person*: they virtually deny Christ; and

denying Christ, they deny the father also; or, as the Apostle says, "he is Antichrist who *denieth the father, and the son.*" Thirdly, we may perceive what is meant by "denying that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." For let us reflect: the Messiah was that long-promised and long-expected personage, a descendant of the first woman, who was to set up a kingdom of a peculiar nature, never to end: a kingdom of a spiritual, and not of a temporal nature: for, independently of all other arguments, Christ himself disavowed all pretension to *civil* authority, saying—"who made me a ruler?" and "my kingdom is not of *this world,*" i. e. not of a temporal nature. This spiritual kingdom of Christ was, of course, to be instituted on spiritual principles: we therefore find that the judges or divinely-inspired organs of the ministry of this kingdom were to be the Apostles: and this authority was to be *limited to them*; for "when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." It is plain, therefore, that whoever resists the divinely-instituted authorities of this kingdom, "denies that the promised Messiah has come in the human person of Jesus." For, the obvious meaning of the Scriptural term "to deny" is *to belie by our acts what with the mouth we profess*: as "to confess" is by our acts to confirm our profession.

He, then, that is of God, heareth or obeyeth the Apostles; and refuseth obedience to any other authority claiming compliance in spiritual affairs: for "no man can serve two masters." On the other hand, all they who profess to be Christ's servants, but who really have not the spirit of belief or the mind of obedience, evince themselves refractory and contumacious of apostolic authority. They comprehend not the true nature and glory of Messiah's kingdom; though, like the Jews of old, they probably picture to themselves high conceptions of its temporal grandeur, and of kings ruling in righteousness, and of senates seeking disinterestedly the glory of God. Or even not content with this expectation of a state of things sufficiently incompatible with the condition of an ungodly world—they picture, perhaps, in their ill-directed zeal, an empire whose spiritual and civil affairs shall be superintended by the Messiah in person; and

wherein the kings and senates of the earth shall be his submissive deputies ! Such are the vain expectations of men : vain, indeed, and quite congenial with the notions of an uninformed, and with the principles of an unbelieving world. The same identical principles support the Jews in the expectation of their Messiah : and the same prompted the Papists to institute Messiah's vicegerent. There is nothing new under the sun. The very same principles for ever tantalize the zealous Protestants with imaginations of an evangelical hierarchy, a spiritual ministry, and attentive flocks. The same zealous, but faithless expectations deluded the Covenanters of Scotland, the Puritans, Presbyterians, and fifth monarchy-men in England, and the Anabaptists in Germany ; giving birth to those *lulus* of enthusiasm, and those monstrosities of fanaticism, which an error in principle must ever generate in the devout, the zealous, and the ardent. But "he that is of God," and is instructed by his word, dreams "not that the kingdom of God will come with the observable circumstances of supernatural or of temporal phenomena ;" or that it will ever exist otherwise than "within the contracted circle of those that confess his name ;" or that Christ's reign will ever be recognised except in the company of his comparatively few disciples ; till that day shall come when the author of evil, and prince of this world shall perish, death be destroyed, and the quick and dead shall have been called to final judgment : when, the elements of the world's present form dissolving, the renovating power of God shall restore creation, reconstituting it and us with changed natures and a new order of things. But be it remembered, that when these events shall have transpired, the Messiah himself shall have ceased to reign : for he shall then have "surrendered up the kingdom to his father." Hence it follows, that "the kingdom of the Messiah" must be sought for in transactions antecedent to the judgment-day and end of all things : and that its whole term must subsist during the present state of mankind, yet independent of the civil establishments instituted by God's providence in the various nations of ungodly men, amongst which the servants of God shall be placed.

Now, we know that "whenever the Son of Man was to sit

upon the throne of his glory, then also were the Apostles to sit upon twelve subordinate thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel :” i. e. *through them and their word was the reign of Christ to flourish*. The kingdoms of *the world* are established by God’s *providence*, with civil ordinances various in various nations ; but all appropriate to their *temporal* nature, and to the subjects of whom they are composed. But the kingdom of *Christ* is established by God’s *holy spirit*, with other authorities and other ordinances appropriate to its *spiritual* nature, and to the subjects of whom it is composed. Obedience to the one is compulsory ; it being instituted “for the restraint of evil doers, and for the protection of those that do well.” Compulsion does not enter into the contemplation of the other ; because it was the purpose of God that “his people should be *willing* in the day of his power ;” or, in other words, that their obedience should be voluntary, and not compulsory. Each of these establishments is distinct from the other, and ought to be independent. God indeed has ordained them both : their interests, therefore, do not necessarily clash ; for “God is not the author of confusion :” and therefore the claim of either to interfere with the other would be a presumptuous pretension and unauthorized usurpation. Kings or other denominations of rulers with their magistrates and senates adjust the laws, and administer the affairs of the one, and are responsible to those who instituted and appointed them, even to God and society, for the discharge of their duties. The apostles and the apostolic word are the only and divinely instituted authority and rule of the other : and the association administers the apostolic ordinances of God, being responsible to God only (1 Cor. 4 : 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). The laws and institutions of the one, vary, in compliance with the mutability of civil interests and social circumstances : the laws and institutions of the other, vary not ; because the very nature of men’s spiritual interests and fraternal circumstances is invariable, immutable.

The question, then, occurs—is this kingdom of heaven yet to come ; or have the Apostles been, and are they still, established by Christ in their authority and office ?

Doubtless, their authority was once obeyed, their institutio

observed, and their office acknowledged by the true servants of God, even so long ago as when the Apostles lived: for, John says, "he that is of God *heareth us*." Even in Christ's days "every one was pressing into that kingdom:" and even previously to the Messiah's appearance, the Baptist preached that "the kingdom of heaven was then at hand:" which declaration Christ confirmed by adding, that "it was even at the doors." Daniel had predicted that in the days of the last of the four great empires, the God of heaven should set up a kingdom which should never be destroyed, but which should stand, unlike the kingdoms of the world, for ever. And Christ, expressly alluding to this very prediction of Daniel, declares that "there were some then standing before him, *who should not taste of death till they had seen the Son of Man* ("the *sign* of the Son of Man") "coming in his kingdom, and the kingdom of God come with power." To the Pharisees who asked the very question, "when the kingdom of God should come," Christ answered, that "the kingdom of God cometh not with phenomena cognizable by ordinary observation, or with the circumstances of political conquest and worldly glory: and that the world should not be able so to notice its advent as to say—'lo! here it comes, or there:' but that the kingdom of God was to subsist inostensibly or unostentatiously in the company of believers." In further explanation of the nature of this kingdom, the Lord instructs his misconceiving and, I might add, *at that time*, carnally-minded, i. e. naturally-minded disciples or Apostles, that it should essentially differ from all other kingdoms in this important particular, viz., that whereas "the temporal sovereigns of the world exercised personal lordship over their subjects; and those that exercised this personal authority with justice and humanity, were called benefactors;—no such benefaction and legislation,—no such system of personal authority and generous rule should exist amongst the associations of Christ's disciples: for, that service and obedience could alone confer precedence in his kingdom:" far less "were the elders or bishops of the various companies of associated disciples to exercise their office as lords over God's heritage."

Evidently, then, the establishment of Christ's kingdom is

synonymous with the establishment of his church. Evident it is, that it is to subsist independently of, and unconnected with, the civil establishments of nations : for a long time, indeed, in opposition to them, or, rather, they to it : and that it is to be governed by other authorities, and its affairs carried on upon other principles : that the laws of civil society are to have no rule in this community ; nor the laws of this kingdom to interfere in the civil affairs of mankind :—that neither the church itself, nor yet any selection from its members, was instituted a legislative body, with power either to enact or to change the laws and ordinances of the holy spirit, instituted for the regulation of the spiritual community : but that the Apostles were once and for ever made the organs of God's will and laws for his people ; and the customs which *they* instituted, and the offices and appointments which *they* ordained, are recorded in scripture, that is, they are the apostolic traditions or dictates of the holy spirit, for the perpetual observance of the community and associations of Christ's kingdom during all ages and in all countries :—that all the ranks and distinctions of men in civil society have no place in this kingdom ; the brother of high degree being reduced, and the brother of low degree being elevated, to one spiritual level : that the bondman was Christ's freedman, and the freeman was Christ's bondman ; and that the very difference of the sexes interfered not to mar the equality and independence of the members, who are individually responsible to God only :—that prudential or rather selfish considerations of worldly emolument in the spiritual and fraternal concerns of the association are incompatible with the spiritual relationship of the members of this family, community, or kingdom ; whose various personal talents, whether of knowledge, peculiar endowments, worldly gifts, or spiritual or miraculous graces, are distributed by God's holy spirit and providence to the possessors of them as trustees or stewards of the manifold grace of God ; being distinct charges to each ; committed indeed to the members individually, but available, through the sole influence of God's holy spirit on the conscience of each trustee, to the benefit of the body and of society at large. *It is plain that such a society could not recognise any other bond of*

union than its common faith : and that even this bond would be, in its very nature, dissoluble, if the laws and ordinances of the community had not the indefeasible authority and immutable permanency of divine obligation.

It is absolutely absurd to suppose that laws and ordinances so instituted by the word of God could be changed by any other authority than that which instituted and recorded them ; or that they should be subject to mutation by the community which was bound by them, or that obedience should be exacted on the ground of any other kind of requisition than that of divine command, or by any obligation less sacred than that which instituted them : such mutability being incompatible with *unanimity* in a *society extending amongst* all nations and all ages *amenable* only to a conscientious obligation of obedience to divine authority, and who vow adhesion to the laws of an association acknowledging its own religious conviction of a baptismal obligation to the divine authority of *the holy spirit*, i. e., to the Apostles, *the organs of the holy spirit*, as testified on the day of Pentecost, and *whose institutions are recorded in the written apostolic word*. Much less could their laws and ordinances be dispensed with, changed, or added to, according to the taste, caprice, or prudence of the civil magistrate, whose very interference in the spiritual affairs of a spiritual kingdom is obviously an usurpation : for to *them* the sword of the spirit has not been committed. And if any one supposes that *the church itself* is divinely authorized to change the laws and institutions of the holy spirit, signified by its organs the Apostles, let him produce that authority of the church from scripture : but in vain will its pages be searched for such an authority. For these reasons it is a fallacious hope that the disciples of Christ can ever be unanimous in their obedience till they shall all discover (what indeed is most obvious) a divine obligation to submit to apostolic or divine rule ; renouncing their own private judgments and prudential notions, or evincing, as the Apostle attributes to the primitive mind of the Galatian converts,—“ a readiness to pluck out their own eyes for the better vision of the holy spirit’s organs, the Apostles.” The civil ordinances and moral obligations of society at large, such as the love of country, public

charities, international humanities, social kindness, affectionate neighbourliness, and private compassion, might, and of course would, be honoured by each conscientious individual of such a body, in his capacity of citizenship. For, no reasonable and well-informed disciple conceives that discipleship is opposed to citizenship, or that the interests, privileges, ties, and humanities of nature and society are, in a single instance, foregone, forfeited, dispensed with, or weakened, either to the prejudice of an unbeliever, or in exclusive favour of a disciple; rather, all these social interests and humanities receive corroboration and fresh impulse from the influence of the fear of God. For, such conscientious disciples will reflect that their Redeemer is also the Creator and Saviour, or Providence: and that he who by his *spirit* established the immutable ordinances of his church, has also in his *providence* established the various and variable ordinances of civil and social life: and that the ordinances of each are instituted upon one and the same unchangeable basis of divine and absolute right of dispensation. God, however, who instituted both, has clearly defined the sphere of each. That the civil magistrate should arrogate a right to interfere in the internal and spiritual policy of Christian or discipular associations, would be an usurpation and tyranny, and an infringement of the natural and indefeasible rights of man: as well might he arrogate a right to change the laws of humanity. That mankind should *individually* oppose and despise the faith and principles of such a society, was and ever is to be expected. But, that *governments* should travel out of their legitimate walk and natural province, to dictate the creed, and coerce the consciences of men, is not a necessary consequence of human unbelief, nor a necessary condition of our fallen and unregenerate nature. It is obvious that the right of civil government is but the collective force of aggregated individual rights: and all governments are, in theory and reason, the contrivance of association amongst the many weak or peaceful, against the aggressions of the few and strong: while in practice they have been a mere faction or conspiracy of the strong to legalize their rapacity and tyranny over the weak. All governments are the providential institutions of God for the protection of each indi-

vidual's rights from the violence of the strong who would compel the weak, or of the many who would coerce the few. And as no individual in the community has any right whatever to dictate or control the speculative persuasions or harmless but conscientious practices of another individual; and as a number of men cannot acquire, by accumulation of individual rights, a privilege which has no rudimental existence whatever in any one individual person of the many; so neither has the whole community itself, nor consequently the government which acts on the community's behalf, any pretension whatever to infringe those rights of individuals which it was instituted to protect; nor to side with the strong or the many in favouring the violence which it was instituted to suppress. I repeat, therefore, that for governments to travel out of their province to coerce the consciences of men, was an innovation and suggestion of Satan, and the flagrant and monstrous deformity of civil tyranny ungenerously allied with spiritual bigotry; and that it constituted, and still constitutes wherever the alliance exists, the distinguishing and broad character of Antichrist (or the spiritual order of the teachers of spurious Christianity) *on the throne of God* (i. e., of God's providential minister) or the reign of Antichrist, or the tyranny of the man of sin. The true disciple of Christ can, in his conscience, acknowledge but one authority in matters purely spiritual. The church of Christ, therefore, or kingdom of God, which is composed only of disciples, or of such as walk as disciples, recognises only this one authority—the apostolic and written word of God. When the civil magistrate, exceeding his proper sphere, and his office assigned to him as “God's minister for good,” essays to exercise over disciples a spiritual authority which God has lodged in the Apostles alone; then does he contract, more or less, the character of an oppressor, and constitutes his throne the seat of Antichrist; or *perhaps* (restricting our view of the tyrant to his *civil* agency in support of the *spiritual* usurpation of Antichrist) the man of sin. And if I am correct in this my definition of Antichrist or the man of sin, then am I irrefragably right in concluding that Popery is not exclusively the antitype of prophecy; and that *the destruction of the man of sin, predicted in scripture, will*

occur by God's so ordering the affairs of the world, that governments will renounce the spiritual authority which they have long usurped and which God has not committed to them ; or rather, that they will *cease to support* the false pretensions of spiritual presumption : and will confine themselves to the civil charge which God has committed to them. And whenever and wherever the church shall thus, in common with the various other sects and diversities of the christian and other religions, be liberated from civil and spiritual oppression ; and the associated servants of God shall sincerely essay to guide and govern their association by the apostolic word or teaching of the holy spirit,—then and there will the millennium have arrived, and the kingdom of heaven will have attained the promised and utmost splendour, to which I believe the word of God has destined it on this side of the judgment-day.

From all these considerations, I conceive that the exclusive application of the term “ Antichrist ” to the church of Rome is a very great and serious error ; and that the church of Rome is merely *one* full-blown blossom of the many that bloom upon the same parent stock. The Greek or eastern church has attained to similar, perhaps nearly equal heights of superstition and blasphemy ; and those nations which separated from Rome at the time of the Reformation, have occasionally shown themselves bitter, perhaps as bitter, persecutors and tyrants. They have frequently dealt as largely in superstition, occasionally evincing more absurdity and fanaticism, and as much opposition to truth, or at least as much contradiction to it, as ever was evinced at Rome. I admit, however, this great difference between the cruelties of Protestant churches and governments, and those practised by the church of Rome : viz., the cruelties and bloody persecutions of the Protestant churches and governments were exceptions to, and departures from, and inconsistent with, their principles ; and accordingly they admitted of correction as they advanced in humanity. Moreover, their cruel practices were but the lesson they had learned at Rome, and had not yet unlearned at home. But *Rome's* cruelties and bloody tragedies are no exceptions, inconsistencies, or departures from her principles : she *abstained and abstains* from them only by necessity. Her prin-

ciples must ever prompt her to enforce them whenever she has political power to indulge her genius. I conceive that "Antichrist" signifies the establishment of the teachers of spurious Christianity, in all ages and in all varieties of form: i. e., Christianity, professing indeed obedience to Christ, but disregarding and evading Christ's apostolic word; or (to express the same thing in different terms) professing Christ, but *denying* him, or *belying their profession*, and absolutely renouncing the holy spirit (the third term of the annunciation of the Godhead expressed in his evangelical name or in the baptismal mission of the Apostles): which *holy spirit*, on the day of Pentecost, *ordained the Apostles to be its organs*; and, *by their instrumentality*, instituted all ordinances of Christ's kingdom—the church. And Antichrist may be said indeed to reign in any country, and at any period, when this spurious Christianity or its teachers ("the false prophet") is leagued with the civil power, and is able to enforce compliance with its dogmas, and to suppress obedience to the apostolic or written tradition, through the aid of the sword or the sceptre. In short, "Antichrist" is spurious Christianity or the spiritual establishment of its teachers; and *the reign of Antichrist is the ecclesiastical combination of this spiritual establishment with the civil power*,—or the union of church and state.

Holding these things in view, let us see how they comport with the predictions contained in the *second division* of John's revelation of Jesus Christ.

SEC. XII.—*Chapter XI. of the Book of Revelation.—The Seventh Trumpet, or Third Woe.*

THE last verse of the *tenth* chapter having intimated to the prophet that further revelations awaited him; accordingly the subsequent chapters, or *the second division of the Apocalypse*, contain the intimated communication. The bulk of this narrative, to the 20th chapter, inclusive, is the history of a protracted persecution and oppression, practised in the name of God upon *his servants*, who are included, doubtless, amongst the many

varieties of sincere, though often, perhaps, much mistaken and persecuted professors of Christ's name, bearing testimony against the enormities of antichristian error :—with a minute description of the persecuting power, and of the divine judgments or providential dealings of God which finally overthrow it.

Let the reader hold in memory that, of the *three* woes denounced in a former chapter, *two* are already past (chap. 9 : 12.—chap. 11 : 14) and are expressly declared to have been the *fifth* and *sixth* Trumpets. Let him also reflect that the *seventh* Trumpet, or the seven Vials, is expressly declared to be the *third* woe (chap. 11 : 14). Lastly, let him reflect that the *fifth* and *sixth* Trumpets, having been characterized as the Destroyer, therefore the political power, whoever it was, that stood obnoxious to these the *two first* woes or providential visitations, was now *destroyed* ; and consequently the *seventh* Trumpet or *third woe*, or the *seven Vials of divine wrath*, must be the divine providential visitation of *some other* obnoxious political power. And, as we have determined the *fifth* and *sixth* Trumpets to the Saracens and Turks respectively as the destroyers of the EASTERN Roman empire, so the *seventh* Trumpet or seven Vials of wrath are the divine judgments upon that *other* obnoxious power, the WESTERN Roman or modern Roman empire, “ whose “ cruelties and idolatries had not been repented of, though the “ divine judgments of the *Eastern* empire had admonished her “ of her similar crimes” (chap. 9 : 20, 21).

Before entering upon an examination and commentary of the succeeding chapters, I will observe that the seven Vials of divine wrath (the subject of the *seventh* Trumpet) do not begin to be poured out till the *sixteenth* chapter commences. Therefore the five preceding chapters of this the second division of the Apocalypse, beginning at the *eleventh* chapter, viz., the 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th, are *preliminary*, being explanatory of the *causes* of the divine wrath and judgments of the Vials. They describe the condition of the oppressed servants of God, and also of their oppressors. The eleventh chapter describes the sufferings and vicissitudes of the true people of God under the circumstances of persecution. The twelfth chapter rehearses the *history of Christianity* from the very promulgation of the

Gospel amongst the Gentiles, together with the Devil's attempt, through the instrumentality of the *then Pagan* Roman empire, to destroy the truth at its very birth—that is, at the period when *the Gentiles* were first addressed with an invitation to participate in the blessings of divine grace. It proceeds to describe the failure of those satanic attempts, and the eviction of Paganism from the imperial throne by the conversion of the Roman emperors and of the empire to *the profession* of Christianity, after a great struggle between the two religions. It (the same twelfth chapter) proceeds to describe the wiles of the Devil, after his eviction, to execute his purpose by other devices;—the partial success of his attempts to extirpate by persecution *the profession* of Christianity;—and his full success, by *corruption* of the truth, to oppress and suppress the *true* worshippers of God. The thirteenth chapter describes the reparation of the Devil's lately lost *Pagan* influence, in the rise of a new pseudo-christian empire, or rather in the resuscitation of the old Roman empire in the West, in a new or modified form, as was instituted by Charlemagne in the year 800: who styled his empire “the German or Holy Roman Empire of the Cæsars in the “THE WEST” (see Puffendorf). It (the thirteenth chapter) then proceeds to describe the immediate and almost simultaneous rise of a *spiritual* empire, which spiritual empire immediately proceeds to create A SPIRITUAL EMPEROR, an IMAGE or *imitation* of THE CIVIL EMPEROR, viz., the POPES of Rome, or THE ECCLESIASTICAL EMPERORS or Bishops of Rome: and it plainly and emphatically describes the conjunction or alliance of these two empires, the spiritual and the civil, for their mutual support. The fourteenth chapter intimates the dawn of returning light upon this state of midnight darkness, in the angelic communication of the EVERLASTING Gospel, or in the various efforts of the persecuted Christian sects to recur to *the first principles of the written word*: and this dawn proceeds to *the aurora* of the Reformation or men's *professed* appeal to the pure and primitive *written record* of the Apostles, or, as the text of the Apocalypse calls it, “THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL,”—the unchangeable word declaratory of the will of God. It (the same fourteenth chapter) proceeds to describe the falling off of many of the political

and spiritual members or nations from the Antichristian League or Western and modern Roman empire : and the retaliation of the Protestant nations, who began to hate their old mother,—the mother of harlots—or to inflict on their old Papist oppressors the same cruelties which they themselves had formerly suffered at *their* hands : and it plainly intimates the rapacity and violence of the reformed nations. The fifteenth chapter describes the condition of the *true* church, or the servants of God as a *distinct and separate party from the Protesting nations, during all these times of persecution, contest, and trouble*, representing them as supported to enthusiasm by God, amidst the fire and fury of the times, and thus distinguishing them from the *reformed national and belligerent churches*.

These *five* chapters being premised, the *sixteenth* chapter proceeds to a detail of the operations of God's wrath on the pseudo-professing and persecuting nations of the Western empire, *of whatsoever creed* ; or to the pouring out of the *Vials*, which terminate in the subversion or destruction of the last of the *three political powers* which are the subject of the triple series of the Seals, Trumpets, and Vials, and which resist the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom : which kingdom is not of a temporal or civil nature, or "not of this world." It foretells, in short, the *civil* freedom and privileges of Christ's disciples, or the lately outlawed servants of God, *in the general abolition of all spiritual tyranny and oppression*. Such I presume to be the topics of the *five* chapters preliminary to the outpouring of the Vials. But, to be more minute.

The object of the *eleventh* chapter of the Revelation—the *first* of the second division of the book—is to give a brief sketch of the state in which the cause of truth was to proceed through, and is finally to emerge from, its oppression. It is, as it were, a prospectus of the subject about to be detailed ; and an exposition of the *causes* which provoked the providential judgments of God on the nations engaged in the oppression of his servants, as those judgments are enumerated in the subsequent chapters. It begins with representing the advocates of truth as worshipping in the Temple of God. And the paucity of their numbers, and the *acceptability* of their worship are signified by the prophet


being bidden "*to measure* the Temple and the Altar, and them "that worship therein." And inasmuch as *the outer court* of the Temple was to be left out of his measurement, "because it was "occupied by *the Gentiles*," we learn that the profession of Christianity prevalent in the world at large was spurious and unaccepted, being utterly unnoticed in the divine estimation. Forty and two months, or twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days (or, as the commentators compute, historical years) was the deluge of tyranny to prevail. Twelve hundred and sixty days, or forty and two months (or three years and a half, as the prophet Daniel, as well as the Apocalypse, expresses the period) were the witnesses of God's truth to bear their testimony, clothed in sackcloth, or afflicted with oppression.

Much interest has been felt in determining the exact antitype of these two witnesses; though no doubt has ever been entertained that they virtually represent the true servants of God. Some have conjectured that the old and new Testaments were signified—some one thing, and some another. With regard to the number "*two*," I apprehend that the general remark which I formerly made respecting the force of all the apocalyptic numbers, is here strictly applicable, namely—that they are never to be interpreted *literally*, but in every instance *figuratively*. In the present instance, perhaps, according to the spirit of emblematical composition, the number "*two*" of the witnesses, as applied to *evidence*, represents merely *the legal sufficiency* of living and ample testimony. Thus the annunciation of Christ's ministry was signified to the cities of Judea by the mission of seventy disciples who were dispatched "*two and two*." However, whatever be the symbolical or figurative force of the number "*two*," the scriptures have not left us unfurnished with the information necessary to determine the precise object intended by the two witnesses. The scriptures of the *old* Testament commonly supply the key to the terms employed in the *new* Testament; just as the predictions uttered by Christ himself, and recorded in the four Gospels, afford the clearest comment on the text of the Apocalypse, as we have already seen in our *application* of the Seals to the destruction of Jerusalem and of *the Temple* and of the Jewish state: and as we shall hereafter

see in our explanation of certain apocalyptic terms hereafter to be noticed. Now, the Prophet Zachariah had represented the church as a golden candlestick, with his seven lamps fed with oil, transmitted by seven pipes from *two olive trees*. The seven churches of Asia, to which the book of Revelation is addressed, are but an application of this mystical number "seven," in this instance symbolically designating *the church of Christ*. And the witnesses, being expressly declared to be "*the two olive trees*," and "*the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth*," are identified with Zachariah's representation of *the church*. The first chapter of the Apocalypse gives the same emblematical representation of the church and its supporter, with this only difference, that the personal likeness of Christ is substituted for the two olive trees. Zachariah's representation of the church is very similar in kind to that given by the Lord Jesus himself to his disciples. "I am the vine, and ye are the branches: as the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine, so neither can ye except ye abide in me." The same language may be applied, substituting the simile of an olive tree and lamps for that of a vine and its branches: as the flame of the lamp is fed by the oil of the olive tree, so does the light of truth shine in the church of Christ, only as the spirit of truth supplies each member from the fountain of truth. A very similar figure is employed by Christ to express the difference between the believing and the unbelieving Jews at the predicted destruction of Jerusalem, when the Mosaic dispensation was to be superseded by the new dispensation or marriage supper of the bridegroom. He likens the kingdom of Heaven, at that particular juncture, to *ten virgins*; *five* of whom were wise and took oil in their lamps; and *five* were foolish and took no oil. That is—the profession of the foolish was an empty one, and so their lights or lamps failed them or went out, involving them in darkness. And while they went to buy oil, the doors were shut; and when they returned, and, having procured oil or discovered their error, sought admission, they were refused it. Which means, that the Jews, who would have been accepted *as Jews*, if they had, *as Jews*, received the Messiah when he appeared amongst them, were ever afterwards excluded, as Jews, who

the covenant of circumcision and of the Mosaic law, pointing to the Messiah, was broken *by them*, and abolished *by God* ; and the church was *thenceforward* to be collected from all nations indiscriminately : and thus was the kingdom of Heaven or the christian dispensation established on the demise of the former or Mosaic dispensation. The two witnesses, therefore, are the servants of God, the disciples of Christ, the *true* church, bearing witness to the truth against the corruptions of error ; or the light or lamp of truth seen shining by the spirit of truth in the people of God or the church of Christ. In the emblematical language of the Apocalypse it is said, “ if any man will “ hurt these witnesses, fire proceedeth out of *their mouth*, and devoureth their enemies. These have power to shut *Heaven* that “ it rain not ; to turn *the waters to blood* ; and to smite *the earth “ with plagues.*” All which figures being interpreted, mean—that the cries of God’s oppressed servants against their persecutors are responded to by the providential vengeance of God, who superintends the cause of truth and its adherents ; *for their sakes* withholding his providential blessing from the providential or civil institutions of persecuting society ; and so ordering the current affairs of the world, that the various national calamities of bad governments, general wars, civil dissensions, and *all kinds of social, civil, and political disaster* should result as the *natural and providential* effects of malignant superstition indulging its lust of human passion and cruel oppression of the innocent : the divine displeasure being thus intimated only to the perception of the intelligence of faith.

The reader may observe that in the very same manner *the four first Trumpets* represent the vicious and unhealthy state of the body politic or of society at large, causing the very *same* national and providential judgments of God to fall on the old *Eastern* empire, as now on the *Western* or modern Roman empire. By these and such like visitations God is seen to inflict retributive vengeance on noxious society, and to withhold his providential blessing from human or divine ordinances of civil institution ; when nations, their people and their governments abuse those institutions to the unrighteous purposes of religious oppression and persecution of innocuous men.



The servants of God, then, or *the two witnesses*, were to prophecy in sackcloth, or to bear their testimony to the truth of God, under the weight of civil oppression, through the whole course of the protracted reign of Antichrist. The consummation of their testimony against the tyranny, corruptions, and enormities of error, was at length to be their "temporary death:" which means, of course, according to the grammatical law of emblematical composition, their *figurative* or *civil* death. Legislative enactments were to be introduced in the civil codes of nations, punishing their fidelity to God with outlawry and anathema: the infamy of confessing God's truth being perpetuated with every contrivance of opprobrium and execration. These cruelties and utter civil disqualifications are signified by their being *killed, and their dead bodies being exposed for three days and a half in the streets of the great city*, figuratively or "spiritually called Sodom and Egypt," and denied the rites of sepulture.

The period here mentioned of "three days and a half," furnishes an opportunity of confirming our proposition, viz., that the various *periods* mentioned throughout the Apocalypse *have no definite term*, such as that of an historical year for each prophetic day. If such were really the fact, then there could be no dispute that "three days and a half" means, with minutest precision, three *years* and a half. But I appeal to the good sense of my reader, that we cannot reasonably conceive the holy spirit to have descended to such historical minuteness, nor yet that any transaction whatsoever recorded in history bore an adequately specific proportion to this precise period in its cruel effects upon the condition of the general church of Christ. And consequently, if "three *days* and a half" do not signify three *years* and a half, then, "three *years* and a half," or 1260 *days* cannot mean precisely 1260 *years*. I therefore conclude that *none* of the apocalyptic periods are to be interpreted with precise reference to their *numerical* force; but that they *all* bear some figurative signification implied in their *arithmetical proportions*: *all the periods* recorded in this historical book, bearing a certain *relative* proportion amongst each other. And as "a thousand *years*" seems plainly to represent an indefinite very long period;

just as "half an hour" seems as plainly to represent an *indefinite very short* period;—so the number "three and a half days," being precisely the half of the mystical number "seven," does not determine any exact period of extreme persecution of the witnesses; but signifies merely that the days of oppression were *divinely* numbered; being also much fewer than the days of many other periods signified in the Apocalypse by specific numbers; and also that the period of *extreme and intolerable* suffering was to be comparatively much shorter than the *extended* term of Antichrist's reign and tyranny: the duration of *extreme* suffering being in the proportion of three and a half *days* to three and a half *years*.

And since the extreme persecution of the church or the witnesses is represented as occurring "in the streets of the great city, Sodom and Egypt," I presume that reference is thereby made to the civil disqualifications of disciples during the triumphant days of *Popery* amongst the nations subjected to the ecclesiastical dominion of *Rome*. For, it will be seen hereafter, that while the term "false prophet" signifies *the teachers* of spurious Christianity under *all forms* of error, whether Romish, Protestant, or otherwise, the term—"the great city"—exclusively represents that consummate manifestation of spiritual tyranny—the *Roman Catholic empire and church*, or *Babylon*, "spiritually callen Sodom and Egypt."

But lo! the providence of God was working a great moral and intellectual revolution in the minds of men; which revolution should restore to these outlaws—these dead in law—the full privileges and functions of *civil life*, and the equal enjoyment and protection of the laws. And the bigots of superstition—the advocates of religious tyranny—were to see with dismay the day when their reign of intolerance was to terminate, and when their late victims were no longer to be subjected to cruel oppressions and civil disqualifications. The twelfth and thirteenth verses of this eleventh chapter give the emblematical representations of these great revolutions of national sentiment. "After three days and a half"—that is, I presume, after an *historically* indefinite, but *divinely measured*, period—of extreme persecution and utter civil privation (in some countries longer and more

cruel ; in others, of shorter duration, or less bitter) “the spirit of *life* entered them again, and they “ascended to *heaven* in a “cloud, and their enemies beheld them.” The term “*heaven*” here obviously means the sphere of civil rule and privilege : that sphere wherein emperors, kings, and other dignities, or the sun and other celestial bodies, together with all the free citizens of a state, may be said to move. The civil life and privileges of the outlawed or dead witnesses were thus restored to them ; their bigoted and mortified persecutors “looking on,” but being unable to retard the progress of national intelligence and liberal sentiment.

The sounding of *the seventh*
SEVENTH TRUMPET. *Trumpet* (which Trumpet comprises and is occupied in *the seven Vials*) announces the divine providences or judgments which wrought these great changes of national, moral, and public policy ; undermining and eventually overthrowing the strongholds of spurious and political Christianity ; eventually terminating *the reign*, though not *the existence*, of Antichrist or the false prophet of the Revelation ; who, as he existed in the days of the Apostle John, long before Popery was invented, may exist long after the demise of Rome’s *civil* power. Thus will God *destroy the man of sin*, or the *civil* existence of *religious* tyranny ; and will establish for men of *all* religious persuasions (and amongst them, for the *true* disciples of Christ) that ameliorated and liberal state of civil society and enjoyment of civil privilege, which is represented in the 20th chapter by the chaining of Satan for a thousand years. The period of peace resulting from this revolution of mankind’s sentiments and political practice might fairly be called the golden age of the world ; and may be anticipated by hope as a period of providential blessing upon the civil institutions of society, such as the world has never yet experienced. For, since the days of the Apostles of Christ, the world has been an arena of *Christian* contention and persecution : and previously to Christianity, the *Pagan* persuasions of mankind presented nothing of a truly moral influence of religion upon society. And though the professors of Christianity be, for the most part, rebellious to the *apostolic ordi-*

nances, or, rather, utterly ignorant of *the nature* of the kingdom of Heaven or of Christ; yet is Christianity, even under the ordinary influence of its many sectarian forms (with one exception, indeed, viz., the church of Rome) a rational, moral, and powerful principle; dictating the things which reason dictates and approves, viz., humanity or the love of our neighbour. And this revolution of the principles of governments, whereby they should become the impartial protectors of all peaceable and harmless men, would undoubtedly be a state of civil affairs so accordant with our reasonable conceptions of God's providential purposes in his institutions of civil government, that we can reasonably contemplate, in such an order of political and civil things, the approbation of Almighty God, and his consequent blessing upon these human and divine ordinances of civil society; wherein *the governments of Christian nations will fulfil the providential purposes of their divine commission*: or when, in the language of the Apocalypse, "THE KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD SHALL HAVE BECOME "THE LORD'S AND HIS CHRIST'S," by fulfilling their required service of protecting *all* innocent men, inclusively (even though it were unintentionally) of the disciples of Christ.

The seventh Trumpet (the multifarious transactions of which are set forth and minutely detailed in the seven Vials), though it is the last of the three *woes* denounced in chap. 8: 13, against the various political opponents of Messiah's kingdom, is nevertheless the annunciation of the fulfilment of *a promise*, sanctioned by the oath of God, *to his servants*. For, with an oath it had been *promised to them* in chap. 10: 7, that "in the days of the voice of the *seventh* angel, when he should "*begin* to sound, the mystery of God should be finished" (that is, the providence of God should *then begin* to bring to pass those historical incidents which should accomplish the deliverance of his servants from civil oppression) "as he had declared to his servants the prophets." Now the seventh Trumpet is the seven Vials. *The seven Vials of God's wrath* are, therefore, the *final* judgments of God upon that mysterious opposition or "*mystery of iniquity*," which had been predicted, with respect both to its *prosperity* and to its *overthrow*, by various prophets: and whose "*finishing*" was to usher in the millennium or peaceful period of Messiah's kingdom — Here let the student remember and reflect on the

scheme of the Revelation. It is a narrative of a *triple series of divine judgments falling successively, on THREE SUCCESSIVE POLITICAL OPPONENTS OF TRUTH, AND OPPRESSORS OF CHRIST'S SERVANTS.* When therefore the third and last establishment of God's *political* enemies shall have been subverted, and the servants of God or the disciples of Christ shall—by whatsoever change of public opinion, or by whatsoever revolution of the principles of Government—have been delivered from long-endured civil oppression,—THENCEFORTH “WILL THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD HAVE BECOME THE KINGDOMS OF THE LORD AND OF HIS CHRIST; AND HE WILL REIGN FOR EVER” (chap. 11: 15). In other words the various *governments* or civil and political establishments of the christian nations, being purged of all religious partisanship, and being occupied solely (whether consciously or unconsciously) in the discharge of *the proper trust which God's providence has committed to them*,—will then stand *divested of their former peculiar character of hostility to God and his anointed spiritual king of a spiritual people.* And they will then be, what God required and always designed them to be, viz., *the protectors of all innocent and peaceable men, and, consequently, of Christ's disciples.* The civil governments of nations, or “*the kingdoms of this world,*” will thus manifest themselves to be “*the kingdoms of the Lord;*” and in this their beneficial and paternal capacity, kings will be the “*foster-fathers of God's children,*” and will maintain (even though it be *unconsciously*) the interests and peace of the kingdom of God or the *spiritual* reign of Christ, which will no more be oppressed, but will be protected by political or civil power: and so, in the apocalyptic language, “he will reign for ever and ever.”

And accordingly, in the prospect of this, their promised deliverance, “the four-and-twenty elders,”—*the representatives of the church* (see chap. 5: 8, 9, 10)—“gave thanks to the Lord “God ALMIGHTY,” i. e., to the *providential* controller of kings, and the disposer of all national events.

Now, the readers of the Revelation have ever inclined to suppose that the annunciation—“the kingdoms of *this* world are become the Lord's and his Christ's”—alluded to some great conversion of *mankind* to the fear of God, whereby the govern-

ments of all kingdoms and their subjects will be animated only by the great ruling principle of the faith of Christ. Hence many expect a miraculous interference of the Almighty, accomplishing this great and otherwise hopeless change of men's hearts. They expect indeed the personal and visible presence of Christ in a millennium, "coming to rule the earth." And consequently, interpreting literally those passages of scripture which speak of "Christ sitting on the throne of David, in the city of Zion, and ruling his people Israel," they look forward to a concomitant return of the Jews, and to the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem, where they deem the seat of Messiah's visible empire will be fixed. But they forget that Jerusalem and the Jews, *as a nation*, are to be "an everlasting hissing;" that "they shall not come into God's righteousness;" that "they shall not be written with the righteous;" nor "come into God's inheritance." They forget also that "the kingdom of heaven comes not with the observable circumstances" of temporal power.

The passage now referred to (chap. 11 : 15), like many other passages of this book, is a mere *annunciation of things then about to be accomplished*: and is spoken by way of anticipation of the millennium. And just as the exclamation uttered in chap. 14 : 8 ("Babylon is fallen, is fallen") is obviously not verified till long afterwards, even till chap. 18 : 2, when it is finally pronounced "Babylon is fallen, is fallen:"—so, on the sounding of the seventh Trumpet,—which consists of the seven Vials of God's wrath—when it is announced that "the kingdoms of this world *are* become the Lord's and his Christ's," we are to understand merely that the providences of God, prefigured in the Vials of his wrath, and *eventually* effecting the happy change in his people's *civil* condition, are then *about to be commenced*. This happy change, constituting indeed the millennium, results, as we shall see, from that intellectual progress of the human mind in the humane science of civil government, which is to affect the right and humane administration of law and civil affairs by the legislative and executive powers of the various nations: a condition this, of civil and political affairs, essentially necessary to the millennium or "the peace of Jerusalem," or Messiah's kingdom. There are many who think

that the gorgeous terms in which the millennium is predicted in the Apocalypse, will scarcely admit of application to the very simple and common-place circumstances of the nations and of Christ's disciples, as manifested in a condition of mere temporal deliverance and mere exemption from state-persecution, and of enjoyment of civil privilege. But, I conceive, that our estimation of these great blessings would have been very different if we had lived in the days of the sword and fagot. So desirable would *then* have appeared to us a condition of deliverance and peace, that no terms, however gorgeous, would have been thought florid and too pompous to be applied to enjoyments so enviable and of so improbable occurrence. A state of civil blessedness, at that time not the subject even of hope (scarcely, indeed, of conceivable possibility, except by the visible presence of the Almighty or the *personal* influence of the Messiah himself) would not have been deemed too richly described even in a representation of Christ coming in the glory of his father, to occupy the throne of David in the favoured city of spiritual Zion. Surely Christ's personal presence at the termination of *the Vials* is no more literal than was the same personal presence at the termination of *the Seals*,—the destruction of Jerusalem and the abolition of the Mosaic dispensation. Why should we suppose that the presence of Christ at the destruction of *Antichrist's tyranny*, i. e., at the institution of *the millennium*, will be more literal than was *the same presence* at the destruction of *Jerusalem by the Romans*, when the *Jewish* oppressors of Christ's disciples were represented as exclaiming—"hide us from the face of him that sitteth **ON THE THRONE**, and from the wrath of the Lamb?" It would appear, then, that the final deliverance of God's servants from *civil* oppression, is to be concurrent or consequent upon the *civil and moral* amelioration of governments and nations. And *thus* it is, that the prediction of the Apostle Paul, concerning the man of sin, will be verified,—“whom the Lord will consume by “the breath of his mouth, and will destroy by” a general diffusion of knowledge or by “*the brightness of his coming*.”

Anticipating, in the expected issue of the events of the seven Vials, the happy termination of all its sufferings, the church, by its representatives, the four-and-twenty elders, returns praise to

God: this seventh *Trumpet* being the very judgments executed by the *Vials*, detailed in chapters 16, 17, 18, 19; whereby God promised, in this eleventh chapter, "*to judge the dead*," that is, to visit his providential judgments on his own and his people's enemies, and to avenge the cause for which his church *had for ages bled and suffered*.

The eleventh chapter, which we have now been considering, is a prospectus of the prophecy; and it terminates with an appropriate exhibition of the Temple (which the prophet had just measured) opening and discovering a view of "the ark" containing God's faithful testament and covenant of favour and protection to his people. "Lightnings, voices, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail," represent the awful judgments of God's *providences*, manifested in "lightnings" or the tyranny and cruel policy of the executive powers or governments,—in "voices" or the discontent, commotions, and rebellions of the people, and the contests of religious and other factions,—in "thunderings" or the wars, foreign and civil, of the nations or of the empire;—all which things are to effect "*the earthquake*" or the subversion of the man of sin, accompanied with "*great hail*" or the temporary devastation of all the social interests and enjoyments of the various nations or divisions of Western Christendom. And thus is to be produced this great revolution of the Western world—a revolution "*greater than any that had ever before been experienced by mankind*." Such are the *general* topics of the *seventh Trumpet*, which are to be more particularly detailed in the *seven Vials* of God's wrath. We now proceed to the *twelfth* chapter, or to the further narrative of affairs, *preparatory* to the pouring out of the *seven Vials*.

I observed on a former occasion, that the Apocalypse (exclusively of the three first chapters) is divided into two distinct portions; and that "*the little book*," or tenth chapter, was added to the *concluding* part of the *first division*, for the purpose of completing the history *forwards* from the destruction of the *Eastern or ancient* Roman empire, to the destruction of the man of sin in the *West*, or the subversion of the *modern* Roman empire or of the antichristian tyranny of its *false teachers*—"the *false prophet*." I must now observe, that the *twelfth* chapter is added

to the commencement of the second division of the prophecy, for the purpose of completing the history *backwards*, from the rise of the man of sin, to the first promulgation of the Gospel *amongst the Gentiles*.

The chapter (12) opens with the appearance of a most admirable sight: "a woman clothed with the sun, and with the moon *under her feet*, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." This is obviously an emblematical representation of the church as it was instituted *upon the abolition of the Mosaic dispensation*, and the call of the Gentiles; glorious in the full day and light of truth; and *surmounted upon the Mosaic dispensation*, whose borrowed light is aptly represented by the moon. The twelve stars or jewels in her crown are, of course, the twelve tribes of spiritual Israel, or the exhibition of God's precious and perfect workmanship, as seen in his redeemed and elect people. chosen from amongst *all nations*, whether Jewish or Gentile: the number "twelve" being the apocalyptic symbol of *perfection*. This woman brings forth a man-child, even Christ as he was preached to the Gentiles by the Apostles "in the name of Jesus;" which man-child was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. The man-child is no other than the Messiah, born of the church, indeed under its JEWISH or typical dispensation; but presented to THE GENTILES in the glorious manifestation of God's pure and full grace. He is the anointed one mentioned in the second psalm of David, who, addressing himself to him, says, "thou shalt break the nations with a rod of iron." Ready to devour this man-child stands "a great red dragon, having seven heads, and "ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads: and his tail drew "the third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth." The Devil, employing the instrumentality of the Pagan Roman empire, is here intended. That the dragon is the Devil, the Apostle declares in chap. 20: 2. That it is the devil, employing the Roman empire as his implement of hostility to the truth, is intimated by the colour "red," the emblem of empire, tyranny, and cruelty: and also by the expression "third part "of the stars of heaven:" the term "third part" having been already appropriated to the Roman empire in the detail of the six Trumpets: and the character is exclusively Roman, because

the third part of the kingdoms of the earth lay subjected to the Roman arms; or, in the language of hieroglyphical allegory, "the third part of *the stars of heaven* were cast by the great red "dragon to the earth." That it is the Roman empire, *in its early, or Pagan days*, appears (independently of the self-evident fact, that Rome was Pagan when Christianity was first preached to the Gentiles) by the ninth verse of this twelfth chapter, which plainly represents the subversion of Paganism, or its ejection from imperial power. It is not unworthy of remark, that the imperial robes of the emperors were gorgeously adorned with enormous brocaded dragons, the symbols of imperial power, (see Gibbon's history). These emblematical figures were, of course, transmitted from the early emperors to those of the later period of Christian profession; and had probably graced the robes of the chief magistrates before the empire became monarchical.

The child was caught up to "*the throne of God*;" and the woman, "with the help of the two wings of a *great eagle*, fled "into the wilderness, where she was to be fed during twelve hundred and sixty days." This, of course, means that Christ Jesus ascended to God; and that the church, his emblematical mother, either sought *obscurity* as a refuge, or found it in *almost extinction*, under oppression inflicted first by *Pagan Rome*, and afterwards by that Romish power, which, in its spurious profession of *Christianity*, was to prevail for twelve hundred and sixty days (or *years*, as commentators compute) over the *Western* department of the Roman empire; and whose history is about to be detailed in the seven following chapters. The reader's notice can scarcely fail to be attracted to the very peculiar expression—"the throne of God." It shows how studiously careful the prophet was, to maintain the *consistency* of his figurative language. For, had he said that the child was caught up to *heaven*, the reader would have been tempted to confound the place of the Lord Jesus's elevation with the *seat of imperial government*,—the general *apocalyptic* signification of the term "heaven." And as the term "heaven;" occurs in this very sense of *political* eminence in the seventh verse of this very chapter, there existed a special necessity for employing a term

("throne of God") in the *fifth* verse, that should be free from the ambiguity that might tempt the reader to suppose that *the conversion of Constantine to Christianity*, and the consequent elevation of Christianity to civil power, were the thing predicted by the prophet. War is now described as occurring "*in heaven*;" and the dragon, who is declared to be Satan (the spirit of Paganism) is cast out into "*the earth*." This passage is alone sufficient to determine the apocalyptic signification of the term "heaven;" for heaven was never the metaphorical residence of Satan. The term is here obviously the emblem of *imperial* station: just as *the heavenly bodies*—the sun and the stars—represent sovereigns and other civil ordinances of God's providential institution. The *war*, therefore, *in heaven* means those contentions for civil pre-eminence, executive mastery, and imperial favour, which the providence of God permitted and instituted between the Pagan and Christian persuasions or factions: the former contending for exclusive retention, and the latter for a participation of civil privilege and imperial favour. And thus far, no doubt, the contest on the part of the Christians was, or might have been, reasonable and laudable; because the avowed object of their effort was, in every sense, an object of reasonable desire and indispensable interest; as the loss of civil privilege is to be deplored as a great calamity. And the success of a contest for participation of imperial favour was indeed matter of most reasonable joy to the servants of God, who amongst the many varieties of the Christian name, must have partaken of the bitterness of Pagan persecution, carried on with more or less of occasional cruelty against *all* Christians, of whatsoever sect or denomination. But when after *a very short period* of joy at the announcement of Constantine's conversion and the deliverance of Christianity from the tyranny of Paganism, the prevailing sects of Christians aspired to *exclusiveness*, manifesting (even in the reign of Constantine, the very first imperial favourer of Christianity) the spirit of intolerance indulging its lust of monopoly, bigotry, persecution, and blood;—then we behold in the selfish and malignant effort abundant source of national calamity and "*woe, woe, woe*;" and the natural operation and

issue of all those passions which bigotry kindles into conflagration to desolate the world, and to convert the civil ordinances of God from a providential blessing into a providential curse. In the issue of this "*war in heaven*," this contest for retention of power on the one hand, and for a participation of power on the other, the Devil, who deceiveth the whole world, having for ages established Paganism upon the thrones of all nations (because the appointments to the kingdoms of the world "had been committed to him; and to whomsoever he would, he gave them") was obliged so far to yield possession of Rome's imperial throne, as is implied by the subversion of Paganism or of Pagan exclusiveness and ascendancy. And this subversion of Paganism was, doubtless, *one* step in the progress of the human mind, or, at least, of human affairs, to the ultimate though distant settlement of the world in the tranquil and rational enjoyment of true liberty, and to the attainment of sound principles in the *science* of government and of the social interests of man. Cruelly persecuting, therefore, as Paganism had been to the professors, and consequently to the confessors of Christ, we cannot wonder that the subversion of this "*accusing*" or proscribing power (which *accused* the Christians to the Pagan emperors by ceaseless charges of disaffection and impiety) is hailed by the servants of God as a subject of the most reasonable joy, and as being propitious to their cause, by tending, at least eventually, to the peaceful establishment of Christ's kingdom. Indeed the conversion of the emperors to Christianity must have excited amongst *all* Christians a hope of deliverance from persecution.

A strict adherence to the principle and rule of interpretation, applicable to *every* term employed in the passage now under consideration, obliges us to interpret the term "our God" (occurring in the sentence—"who accused them before *our God* day and night") as meaning *the civil sovereign*. In this sense the Apostle Paul (in his predictions uttered on this very subject) uses the term "God:" representing the man of sin as "exalting himself above all that is *called* God, or that is worshipped" (revered). Scripture often uses the term "God" in this sense;

as, for instance, "ye shall not speak evil of *the Gods* of thy people:" and again,—"*there be Gods many*" (1 Cor. 8 : 5): and again—"I said said ye are *Gods*" (Psalm 82 : 6).

In commenting, however, upon the seventh verse of this twelfth chapter ("and there was *war in heaven* : Michael and " his angels fought against the dragon ; and the dragon fought " and his angels, and prevailed not ; neither was there place " found any more in heaven : and the great dragon was cast " out—that old serpent called the Devil and Satan—which " deceiveth the whole world : he was cast out into *the earth*, and " his angels were cast out with him : and I heard a voice say- " ing in heaven, now is come salvation, and strength, and the " kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for, the " accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them " before *our God* day and night: and they overcame him by the " blood of the lamb, and by the word of their testimony: and " they loved not their lives unto the death: therefore rejoice, " ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them")—in commenting, I say, upon the seventh and following verses just recited, it is particularly to be observed—first, that there are few passages in the whole book of Revelation requiring peremptorily a more strict adherence to the rules and principles laid down for our interpretations. For, if the term "*heaven*," occurring so frequently in the paragraph just quoted, is not to be interpreted *figuratively* ; in other words, if it really signifies the metaphorical dwelling-place of the Almighty, and *not* the sphere of *earthly government*,—then we are compelled to contemplate an unintelligible conflict in the realms above, opposed to all reasonable conceptions of the power and circumstances of the Deity, and involving the mind in the most superstitious and revolting absurdities. And in the invocation of "*the heavens and them that dwell in them*, to rejoice," we are compelled to admit, by some confused transference of an earthly scene to heaven, and again from heaven to earth, that *the conversion of Constantine and his subordinate civil ministers to the profession and state institution of Christianity*, were things most acceptable to God, and were recognised by the heavenly host as the subject of their unqualified joy. But if, on the other hand, the term "*heaven and they that*

dwell therein" is to be interpreted figuratively as meaning the sphere of earthly government, and of *faithful men's general participation in the benefits of civil privilege*, and of deliverance from Pagan ascendancy and tyranny; then we can easily comprehend the true and reasonable cause of "joy," which the text invites to. We can also, in that case, comprehend in what sense we are to understand "the Devil's being cast down *out of heaven* upon "*the earth*" (was Satan's previous residence *really in heaven?*) and the true nature of "*the war in heaven*," and also of *the parties engaged in the contest under the providential influence of God's angelic or ministerial agency in human and all worldly affairs*. For the scriptures represent the Godhead as transacting his providential purposes by the agency of "ministering spirits," messengers, or *angels*. And "Michael" is represented, in certain passages of scripture, as *that particular agent*, whom the Deity employs in his providential care of his favoured people in the *political* affairs of the world. Secondly, it is to be observed, that though the parties interested in obtaining the favour of the government, and claiming to participate in the benefits of state-favour and in the privileges of imperial protection, are *congratulated upon their deliverance from the persecutions of Pagan ascendancy*,—yet is there not a syllable of congratulation upon the subject of *Christianity being called to fill the place* which Paganism had long usurped, and which the Devil had lately occupied and abused. *The war* which had been instituted in *heaven* (the struggle for imperial favour) had for its plea of justification, on the part of the Christians, *the deposition of an usurped power* and of *a persecuting ascendancy*; but not *the elevation of men professing Christianity to the exercise of spiritual dominion or a coercive hierarchy*. And indeed these interpretations are fully confirmed by what actually occurred upon the demission of Paganism, when the Emperor Constantine and his successors became converts to Christianity, and immediately threw the weight of their influence into the christian, or rather, into the sectarian scale. The conflicting sects of corrupt christianity instantly commenced their political cabals; and the emperors themselves, taking part with the Arian sect, whose leaders *happened at the time to prevail in the palace*, of course opposed, and

often persecuted to banishment, and *even to death*, the Athanasian or other party whose doctrines on speculative points were at variance with the creed of the executive magistrate. So that the christian historian blushes for the disgraceful scenes of wanton cruelty that were enacted by both, or rather by all christian parties *in the name of Christ*. The *civil* monarch, mistaking the commission that he had received of God,—and conceiving that it required him to enforce the truths of Christ, or what he believed to be the truth,—was compelled, on that false principle, to exert his divine authority, and, by an unseemly arrogation of attributes pertaining only to Deity, to suppress all error, or what *he believed* to be error; and even to punish it as *crime* or an offence against the state. Had he but known what that means—“my kingdom is not of *this world*”—and that Christ himself repudiated the notion of a divine commission or right to *interfere in civil affairs*,—saying, “man, who made me to be a ruler or divider?” and, “ye know not what spirit ye are of: for, the “Son of Man is not come to destroy men’s lives;—the *civil* monarch, contenting himself with the sword of *civil* justice, which Providence had placed in his hand, would never have presumed to handle *the sword of the spirit*, or make pretensions to prophecy: nor would Christianity have preposterously sought the aid of the *civil* sword to make men wise unto salvation. The *civil* monarch would have confined his interference to the duty of maintaining the *civil* peace of society: he would have protected *all* in their natural and indefeasible rights: he would have defended the weak and the few against the many and the strong, in the peaceable and peaceful exercise of their conscientious principles; and would have punished *all crime*, and repressed *all violence*. Great are the evils arising out of *an error in principle*. So many *ages* of historical experience were required to teach governments their legitimate sphere of divine authority! A lesson, indeed, which at this day they have only half learned.

But what are we to understand by “now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ?”

I reply, that this, as well as all the other blessings resulting from the providence of God, proposed as the result of the seventh

Trumpet or *seven Vials*, is most obviously spoken by way of *anticipation*. A very similar passage (intimating, indeed, these very providences and the very same blessed results) occurs in chapter 11 : 15, where the seventh Trumpet *first* announces those divine or providential judgments, which are *destined* in the seven Vials to overthrow the tyranny of Antichrist. "The kingdoms of *this world* ARE BECOME the kingdoms of *our Lord*, and he shall reign for ever and ever." The passage *now* under consideration (chap. 12 : 10) is but a repetition of the very same prediction and incidents contained in chap. 11 : 15. The subject of *both* passages is one and the very same—viz., the deliverance of the church, or the true disciples of Christ, from the tyranny of *civil and antichristian* oppression. It is a mere *anticipation* of transactions, at that time destined to accomplish, eventually, the blessed deliverance anticipated. For, the *seventh Trumpet* not only comprehends the *seven Vials* or the judgments of Antichrist, but it *also* rehearses the demission of *Paganism*, an occurrence which, of course, *preceded* the reign and tyranny of Antichrist : and therefore *both of these events* are treated of as *preludes* to the deliverance of the church, or to the millennium, which is but a long and blessed period of temporal peace to the kingdom of Christ, or the disciples of the Lord. That *all* these annunciations are really spoken by way of anticipation of *then* distant events which were to occur *after ages of disaster*, is a view fully confirmed by the glaring fact, that a long train of sufferings succeeded to this annunciation ; and also by reflecting that the knowledge of these very facts of future history, though *sweet in the mouth* of the prophet, was *bitter in his belly* : though sweet to the taste of *anticipation*, it was bitter in the *prospect of the process of accomplishment*. For, to the world at large, and to the generations of men then succeeding, the revolution of Satan's *Pagan* empire,—so far from producing any immediate and permanent benefit to *any* class of men—foreboded "*woe*"—viz., the *third* and *last* of the *three woes* announced in the former division of the prophetic book by the *three last Trumpets*. For, the Devil's devices were now to be exercised in new modes of deception, oppression, and cruelty. And this prediction of "*woe to the inhabitants of the earth*" or Roman empire, at the very

moment of inviting the saints "to rejoice" at the demission of Paganism or of the dragon, ought to induce commentators to pause in their views of congratulation at the elevation of Christianity to political power by the conversion of Constantine. The Lord Jesus having declared that the kingdom which he came to establish is not of the nature of a civil institution, i. e., of a kingdom of this world,—the mind of a disciple is at once forcibly struck with an apprehension that political Christianity must be directly opposed to the purposes of christian truth. What else could possibly have been meant by "my kingdom is not of this world?"

The legislative and executive authorities of all nations being God's judicial representatives,—we can understand that the term "our God" may represent either the Deity himself, or the Deity's representative; according as the necessities of the context, where the term occurs, may chance to require. In this passage, the context plainly requires that the Deity himself be understood.

SEC. XIII.—Chapter XII. of the Book of Revelation.—
The Seventh Trumpet, or Third Woe.

THE ascendancy of Paganism, the common enemy of the christian name throughout all its sects, had hitherto restrained the feuds and ambitious aspirations of them all; and had thus "hindered the man of sin," or political Christianity, "from manifesting himself." But Paganism "being now taken out of the way," the genius of error, under the profession of truth, had full scope to display its malignant and tyrannical character. And thus, though the Devil's Pagan establishment was overthrown, he nevertheless contrived, through the instrumentality of spurious and ascendant Christianity, still to persecute the advocates of truth, and, under the name of truth itself, to exercise an influence over mankind as effectual as he had ever obtained under the ascendancy of Paganism. "By the help of the two wings of a great eagle," the woman flies into the wilderness, where she is nourished for 1260 days. This fact shows that the period of "the salvation and strength and kingdom of our God and the pow

"of his Christ," predicted in *this twelfth chapter*,—and also the period when "*the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever*," predicted in the *preceding eleventh chapter*,—are synonymous predictions, and had not yet "*come*," but were merely *anticipated* by the prophet in *both passages as results* of the calamities about to be detailed.

The eagle being Rome's standard and emblem of empire, commentators have conjectured that this apocalyptic eagle represents the Roman state and her imperial government: and consequently that *the two wings* of the imperial bird represent the two metropolitan seats of the empire—viz., Rome and Constantinople: in both which emporia nominal and general Christianity received, of course *at first*, protection, when Paganism was subverted by Constantine's conversion. But, that the honour and advancement of *the true cause and church of Christ* cannot possibly have been contemplated in the prophetic expression of "*the help* of the eagle and his two wings," is evident from the reflection that the woman or church of Christ is enabled, by the help of the two wings, merely *to fly into the wilderness*; a retreat incompatible with any interpretation of a *state of political elevation and temporal prosperity* under Constantine and his successors. "*The wilderness*" was a place whither the woman contrived *to escape and hide herself*: and it is not easy to conceive how Rome and Constantinople could have contributed to such an escape and retreat. Neither, on the other hand, can the wilderness be interpreted as a state of *privation and persecution*; for, the woman *voluntarily seeks* this retreat from her persecutor. I therefore incline to the conviction that *the great eagle* represents *the providence of Almighty God*. The very same figure of an eagle is employed in Exodus, chap. 19; 4, to represent God's providential agency in the deliverance of the Israelites—"I bare you *on eagles' wings*." The face of an eagle is the designation of one of "*the four living creatures*" representing the sovereign attributes of God, in the fourth chapter of the Revelation: which representation is evidently a parallel of Ezekiel's vision in chap. 1: 10. Elijah's retreat to the wilderness during the *exactly same* period of three years and a half (*where he was fed by ravens, which, contrary to their nature*

were made conducive to the prophet's natural sustenance) was undoubtedly a type (*the type*) of this woman's retreat, or of the state of the church during the reign of Antichrist. In *the wilderness* the whore of Babylon is represented as sitting (still, however, upon the Beast with seven heads and ten horns) after her reduction by the Vials of God's wrath. With respect to *her*, indeed, the wilderness *must* mean some state of political degradation; because the whore was *reluctantly and forcibly reduced* to retire into the wilderness: *the woman*, on the contrary, *voluntarily retreats* thither. It must be remembered however, that the whore of Babylon's retreat was *the loss* of political power; whereas, the woman, when she retreated, had never possessed political power. I conclude, therefore, that "the flight of the woman into the wilderness" (a land unknown and unfrequented) means, in *her* particular case, *a retreat to obscurity, wherein no trace of true or apostolic Christianity is discoverable in the pages of history, amongst whose voluminous records and ecclesiastical legends, even for ages, we look in vain for any clear intimation of the simple and pure truth's existence*; and are tempted to adopt Christ's interrogatory—"shall we find faith, during all this period, in the earth?" Remote from the scenes of historical record, the scattered individuals who maintained allegiance to their God and king, retreated to obscurity, and escaped, like the seven thousand in the days of Elijah, from notoriety or even historical notice; and like Elijah himself, who was fed in the wilderness by ravens, were favoured by the humanity, probably of infidels or careless professors of the current and hateful religion, who compassionated the oppressed, and despised their oppressors. As a specimen of the providential manner in which individuals may have been protected in their opposition to the corruptions of Antichrist, I would instance the countenance received by Wickliffe from the Duke of Lancaster; or that of Lord Cobham from the partial favour of the king himself, and of others. And when we reflect on the obscure history of the Paulicians, who for ages had preceded Wickliffe, we may easily comprehend how there existed, even in the hours of spiritual midnight, *seven thousand*, or an indefinite number, who had not bowed the knee to the modern Baal.

In her retreat, then, in the wilderness, and almost, if not entirely, withdrawn from the notice of the secular and even of the ecclesiastical historian (except as we may conjecture that *disciples* were probably the persons reprobated in certain prejudiced and exaggerated histories of *heresy*) the church is nourished for twelve hundred and sixty days.

The serpent casts out of his *mouth** a flood of *water*,† with the purpose of overwhelming the woman. By this flood issuing from the serpent's mouth, is intended, I conceive, not altogether and solely or precisely the inundations of the barbarous and Pagan nations upon the falling but converted Western empire, as commentators generally suppose it was;—but the flood of *religious error and superstition* brought with the invading and Pagan hordes: wherewith the Devil—the author of every lie and of all error—contrived to deluge the world; and which threatened to sweep away Christianity from the earth. Thus did the Saxons extirpate Christianity in Britain. But “*the earth* helped the woman;” for, even *disciples* or *true Christians* obtained a respite from the bitterness of persecution during the state of commotion, wherein the Northern conquerors were intent rather upon securing their conquests than upon propa-

* The *mouth* is obviously an apt emblem of the source of *doctrine*, whether true or false; as the term “*waters*” is of *nations* or *multitudes*. Thus the sword of the rider on the white horse (chap. 19) is said to proceed out of his *mouth*: it is “the word of God.” So also the three unclean spirits mentioned in chap. 16, are said to proceed out of *the mouth* of the beast and the dragon, and the false prophet. And so, too, in the description of the Turkish power (chap. 9: 18), the destruction of the Eastern Roman empire is declared to be effected by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which issued out of *the mouth* of the horses. Which last-mentioned phenomenon means (not a prophetic analysis of *gunpowder*! which some commentators rejoice to discover as having been employed at the siege of Constantinople; but) that the Turks were borne forward in their career by the fury which *the Mahometan superstition* inspired.

† The term “*waters*” being explained by the prophet himself to mean “kindreds, and people, and tongues,” we are led to conclude that a “*flood of water*” means an *inundation of barbarian hosts*. Yet, when we reflect that this *flood* is cast out of the serpent's *mouth*, we are compelled to contemplate the inundation of the barbarian nations with reference to *the religions* which they brought with them; for, the term “*mouth*” is evidently significant of the source of *doctrine*. Again, when we are told that “*the earth*” (the apocalyptic designation of the Roman empire) “*opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood*,” we are informed that *the religions* of the inundating barbarians *were lost and disappeared*, by the acquiescence of the barbarian conquerors themselves in the Christianity of the overwhelmed empire and its conquered or prior inhabitants.

gating their faith. And the indifference of these invaders to the subject of religion is plainly seen in the fact that the Christianity of the conquered soon prevailed over the Paganism of the conquerors. And thus "the earth opened her *mouth*, and "swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his "*mouth*." Thus the Saxons of England were, after a while, converted to Christianity. "And the dragon in his wrath, "made war with *the remnant* of the woman's seed. All which being interpreted, means, I presume, that the commotions of the barbarian invasion favoured the freedom of religious persuasion, and for a long time exempted the servants of Christ from civil persecution:—that the various Pagan barbarian invaders, instead of imposing their Paganism upon their conquests, eventually adopted the Christianity of the conquered:—and that the many varieties of error and superstition, which deluged the world, in the character of Paganism, successively failed to effect Satan's purpose of *obliterating the truth*; and that finally, when each successive doctrinal delusion had spent itself upon the world at large, without deceiving and corrupting the elect and *few* people of God, the disappointed enemy of man resorted to another device of obliteration, and to a new method of hostility—viz., that of engaging spurious Christianity itself in a war of *extermination* against "*the remnant*" or small remains of the woman's seed: as will appear by the next or *thirteenth* chapter.

SEC. XIV.—*Chapter XIII. of the Book of Revelation.—
The Seventh Trumpet, or Third Woe.*

IN the decline and degeneracy of the Roman empire at large, its *Western* portion, too feeble to maintain the control of its insubordinate provinces, and dilapidated by the repeated inundations of other and more distant barbarians, had now reached the period of its political demise. From its ruinous elements was adjusted a new frame of European polity. Yet was this adjustment a change of *form* rather than of *substance*; a revolution rather than a subversion. Not such was the fate of the

Eastern portion of the empire in the day (long subsequent to the period now under contemplation ; though its history had, for the sake of historical connexion, been already related in *the Trumpets* or narrative of *the old empire*, which had been continuously maintained in *Constantinople*)—in the day, I say, of its providential visitation by the Saracens and Turks. *There* we behold, not a *revolution*, but a *subversion* or utter destruction : a destruction as complete as was that of the Jewish kingdom by the Romans, already recorded in *the Seals* : an obliteration as total as that of some ancient city overwhelmed in an *earthquake* or volcanic flood. In the Turkish invasion of the *Eastern* empire, a strange nation with other customs, laws, and language, poured forth its flood of myriads, sweeping the surface of the soil ; and left generally not a vestige of laws, habits, customs, religion ; in some places, scarcely of language ; and in many places, none of christian population. But in the political fabric that arose on the site of ancient *Western* Rome, might be recognised an *identity* both of the materials and even of the form of the ancient edifice. In the revolution of this *Western* Roman world, the successive swarms of invading barbarians oppressed, but did not utterly destroy the empire. They became gradually amalgamated with the old Roman population : “ the feet and “ toes of the colossal image thus becoming *partly of iron and “ partly of clay.*” And eventually, in the brittleness of these terminal members, the old Roman empire of the West crumbled under the influence of their politico-religious genius—that is, of the spirit of freedom in their *civil* institutions, and of slavish superstition in their *spiritual* institutions : and so *all the individual provinces of the old Western empire* established their own national independence ; or underwent merely such ordinary mutations as were necessary to give permanency to their several settlements. Many of them were *again combined* in a federal association, restoring even *the old imperial name* ; a name which even at the present day is not yet extinct.* At this very moment (1850)

* The supremacy of the German Emperor was not confined to *Germany alone* : the hereditary monarchs of Europe confessed the pre-eminence of his rank and dignity. He “ was the first of the Christian princes ; the “ temporal head of the great Republic of the West. To his person the “ *title of Majesty* was long appropriated.”—Gibbon's *Roman Empire*, vol. 9 : chap. 49 : page 217.

the Emperor of Germany (the successor of Charlemagne, who established the restored or modern empire, and styled it "*the empire of the Cæsars in the West*, or the German or holy Roman "empire") is actually engaged in the work of protecting the spiritual empire of the Roman Pontiff. A still larger portion of the European nations manifested the spirit of the defunct imperial establishment, by engrafting on their new civil establishments, either wholly or partially, the obsolete code of Roman civil law. And a sameness of customs and of religion, and a congeniality of popular settlement, assimilated the many nations of the revolutionized empire; indicating them still as the connected members of the one great and once united European family; and instituting a mutuality of political and religious interests, and a reciprocity of civil and social intercourse, which caused them to co-operate, sufficiently at least to stamp their new constitution as a modification of their former connection of community—(see Gibbon's, Robertson's, and Hume's histories). No such communion of interest is to be found amongst the independent kingdoms and nations of the other parts of the globe. Doubtless, the Roman Catholic, or spiritual authority of the Pope, was the chief cause of this union of the nations; or in apocalyptic terms, "he causeth the earth, and them which dwell therein, to worship the beast, whose deadly wound was healed." Thus the ancient system, in which the constituent parts of the newly-established polity had formerly been cemented, was, in some degree, recognizable when the fragments of the old imperial diadem became independent crowns. Such coincidences cannot reasonably be viewed as *fortuitous*, though curious, *resemblances* amongst the members of the new forms into which the elements of a political chaos had now arranged themselves: but in the sameness of substance, and similarity of constitution, we recognise *an identity of person*; and perceive that the *Western Roman empire* (contemplated with reference to its *provincial elements and imperial whole*) had not finally and *utterly perished*; but, as in the transformation of a chrysalis, had merely *changed its mode of existence*. The rise of this power, or the *resurrection* of the fallen empire of the West, the prophet is about to represent.

John stood upon the sand of the sea shore, and saw a beast rise up out of "*the sea*," having seven heads and ten horns; and upon his *horns* ten crowns; and upon his *heads* the name of blasphemy. The beast resembled a leopard, with a bear's feet, and a lion's mouth: and the dragon (the Devil, the spirit of Pagan or old Roman tyranny) gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

The turbulent element out of which this beast arose, is an apt representation of the agitations and mutations of the political world, which overthrew the old Roman Western empire and gave rise to the national establishments which succeeded it. This, indeed, is specially expressed in the prophet's own interpretation, given in chap. 17 : 5 :—"the waters" (the sea) "which thou sawest, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." The leopard, bear, and lion, are emblematical, I presume, of Asia, Europe, and Africa. Their ferocious natures characterize the old Roman empire, whose *resurrection* is now described in the characters of the beast now rising out of the sea; which goes upon the feet of that animal which was a proper emblem of *European* nationality. The seven heads and ten horns plainly identify the beast now rising out of the sea, with the dragon represented in the preceding chapter, whose tail had drawn the third part of the stars of heaven, and had cast them down. But there is this remarkable and important difference between the dragon and the beast, or between the old and the new Roman empire—viz., the dragon wore crowns, the emblem of sovereignty, on his seven (successive) heads: whereas the beast wears them upon his ten (contemporary) horns: intimating that the sovereignty had now passed into other hands; and that whereas it had been concentrated into one supreme power over the several provinces of the old empire; it was now divided into many independent sovereignties or kingdoms in the new establishment of the Roman territories. That the heads are successive, and not contemporary, is proved by the prophet's own declaration,—“five are fallen, one is, and the other is not yet come.” That the horns are contemporary and not successive, is proved by the prophet's declaration—"they receive power one hour with the beast;" that is, they constitute the power of the

beast, as their combined operations and their eventual hostilities and dissensions demonstrate. The number "ten" does not (at least in *my* apprehension) represent any *specific* and never varying number ; but like our *indefinite* term, "a dozen," means, I conceive, an indefinite small number, though greater, of course, than other numbers of an inferior denomination. Nor yet does the number "seven" of *the heads*, denote (as I conceive) any *importantly* specific number ; except as I shall presently state. Commentators, in general, have been very solicitous to specify the exact number of states, into which the Roman empire was split, as being *accurately ten* : and violent, and, as I conceive, utterly ineffectual, have been their efforts to square history and geography with the literal terms of the Apocalypse. Had they but interpreted this and all other apocalyptic numbers in their natural or *figurative* sense, i. e., conformably with the *general* figurative nature of the whole book, they would not have been obliged to exercise, upon this and other occasions, such unsuccessful conjecture and unjust violence. That the horns mean *kingdoms*, is determined by chap. 17 : 12—"the ten horns are "ten kingdoms, which have received no kingdom *as yet*" (i. e., when the apostle wrote)—"but receive power as *kings* one hour with the beast:" that is, *collectively* they constitute the beast. In chap. 17 : 8, the beast now seen to rise out of the sea, is declared to have existed before ;—to have had that existence *suspended for a while* ;—and *again to have it restored to him* previously, and indeed long previously, to his eventual destruction : "the beast that thou sawest, was, and is not, and shall ascend "out of the abyss" ἀβύσσος (that is, the sea ; though the translators chose to render it "*the bottomless pit*") "and shall go into "*perdition*," as is represented in the twentieth verse of the nineteenth chapter. This description tallies well enough with the

* We have already seen, that John "saw *this very beast* rise up out of the sea," or the agitations of the political world. What reason, then, is there for not understanding the word "the abyss" as meaning *the sea* ? The word means *any* deep waters. In Luke 8 : 31, the herd of swine ran into "*the lake*" (ἀβύσσος) "and perished there," and in the parallel passages of Mathew and Mark, the plain word "*the sea*" is employed by the translators as the rendering of the same Greek word. All political establishments have owed both their origin and their destruction to the *commotions of the political world*, apocalyptically represented by the sea.

empire of Western Rome, which after its devastation by the barbarians, and after a temporary suppression of its power and name, was restored by Charlemagne, though in a transformed state.

But the interpretation of "*the heads*" of the beast, even with the aid of the prophet's subsequent explanation, is not, at first sight at least, so obvious; however obvious may be the application. He declares "*the heads to be seven mountains.*" And yet this very explanation, so plainly characteristic of Rome that it cannot possibly be mistaken, seems to carry with it something significantly mystical: for he immediately adds, "*and there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space: and the beast that was and is not, even he is an eighth head, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.*" The *heads*, therefore, represent, not merely the seven famous mountains of Rome, but also the *capital* forms of government which Rome *had* experienced, and *was to experience*. And the form under which she was to exist, with partitioned dominions, governed by independent or distinct sovereigns, with one imperial head,—and in which form she was finally to perish—is an *eighth* and the *last* head, though still to be numbered or identified with the *seven*. These heads or forms of the old Roman government, I suppose, are to be enumerated in some such manner as commentators have suggested. Rome having been governed at different times by *kings, consuls, decemvirs, dictators, triumvirs, emperors, and exarchs*.* Of these seven heads, five certainly were already

* Rome's own historian, Tacitus, enumerates the successive changes of Rome's executive government, in this order; with the exception of the last (exarchs), which, of course, had not yet existed in the days of Tacitus, when the seat of government remained fixed and confined to the city of Rome, and in the persons of the emperors. He mentions, it is true, the form of *military tribunes* with consular power: but he adds, that this form was of very short and insignificant duration. He also remarks that the *dictatorship* was only resorted to as a temporary expedient in times of extraordinary state-emergency. The dictatorship is therefore possibly not to be enumerated amongst the forms of Roman government: in which case, I suppose, the military tribunes with consular power must be substituted for the dictatorship, in order to make up the exact number "*seven*." The reader will perhaps object that this lax mode of enumerating the *heads* of the beast, and of thus forcing history into compliance with the terms of apocalyptic description, is too libertine and arbitrary for the

fallen when the prophet wrote : the sixth (the emperors) then existed : and the seventh (the exarchs) has not yet come. As for the *Italian kingdoms* of the Visigoths, Lombards, &c., previously to the time of Charlemagne, who flourished in the latter part of the eighth century, they did not even profess to be *Roman* establishments, nor to be concerned in the affairs of the *Roman empire*, the subject of the prophet's theme. Let it not, however, be passed unnoticed, that upon all and each of its heads, past, present, and to come, the name of blasphemy was written : that is, under every form of her government, Rome had maintained, and was to maintain, the cause of error, and the dominion of Satan. I apprehend, however, that the number "seven" involves some exquisite and spiritual mystery : and that it is applied to the beast characteristically of divine execration, conformably with Rome's own assumption of mysteriousness and pretension of divine origin, favour, and authority. The number "seven" has ever enjoyed a mysticalness in the estimation of all nations. Even nature herself affects, or is supposed to affect, the number "seven ;" and has, thereby, perhaps, given origin to its popular reputation of mysticism. There are seven days in the week : and the general consent of nations in this division of time suggests, according to the opinion of some, that it has been coeval with man : though the historical narrative of scripture does not seem to confirm this opinion ; there being scarcely an allusion, in the language or recorded customs of the patriarchs, to this periodical reckoning ; nor any allusion, what-

credit of prophetic pretension. But this objection vanishes on reflecting that the prophet, in thus describing his object, was merely delineating the reputed features of a notorious character then existing : and that the only point of his description, in which his prophetic credit was at all concerned, consisted in his predicting that the Roman empire, or the old seven-hilled city, had yet to experience *one, and only one*, change in the form of her government, before it should undergo an absolute transformation ; or rather, that the last or *eighth* form should be a *restoration of one* (the imperial) form of the Cæsars. It was sufficient for the prophet's purpose, that his personification of the object designated by the number "seven," should figuratively express the mysterious character affected by Rome herself in her own adoption of the characteristic number "seven ;" and that it should accord with common reputation. The reader will be satisfied, on reflection, that the prophet's representation of things then present *ought* to have complied with common reputation and the national vanity, which delighted to give the empire the title of "the city built on seven hills."

ever to the observance of a sabbath previously to the enunciation of the Mosiac revelation. There are seven primitive colours; seven notable planets : at least such was and is their number according to vulgar persuasion : seven deadly sins, as moralists have taught : seven spirits before the apocalyptic throne of God ; though the *unhieroglyphical* scriptures assign the character of unity to the holy spirit : seven churches in Asia : seven lamps, seven eyes, and seven horns of the Lamb : seven Seals, seven Trumpets, and seven Vials : seven of every clean kind of beasts went into the ark : seven years of plenty, and seven of dearth in Egypt : seven plagues proverbially spoken of in scripture : Balaam built seven altars : seven nations of Canaan : not to mention the reputed auspiciousness of this mystical number "seven ;" its various applications to proverbs both sacred and profane ; and its sundry occurrences upon all subjects philosophical, historical, traditional, physical, civil, and moral. Rome itself, of which we speak, was built upon seven hills ; to which the prophet alludes in the passage under consideration. And when the seat of empire was transferred to Constantinople, it was necessary that the seven hills should there also be found or fancied : though, I suspect, in spite of the precise enumeration of travellers and residents, that the visitor would be puzzled, whose curiosity or faith in statistics should prompt him to seek that exact number either in Constantinople or even in Rome : which number, I scarcely doubt, would have been successfully sought in Jerusalem or any other great city where the necessities of superstition required that it should be found. The true and successful interpretation of the Apocalypse obviously and largely depends on a correct apprehension of its characters. That these are all emblem, or symbol, or figure, it would be frivolous at this advanced stage of interpretation to spend more time in contending. The *numbers*, therefore, *throughout the whole book* are *all* mystical, in conformity with the grammatical law of the composition. It may not be easy to say how it happened that certain numbers at first acquired their conventional significancy of emblem ; or what it was that conferred upon some of the numbers, 2, 3, 4, 7, 10, 12, the mystical reputation which they have enjoyed. It is probable that the ancients, being greater

adepts in that faculty of sagacity or of superstition which exercises itself upon emblem, were much more adroit in the use of augury than we are, whose skill extends little further than some half jocular and half serious maxims respecting "odd magpies, and even crows." Some of the emblematical numbers employed by the ancients may probably have acquired their conventional reputation by purely accidental circumstances. The number "ten," for instance, had, I conceive, no greater mysteriousness of signification than that indefiniteness which belongs to our term "dozen." The Hebrews and other nations, having no such lax or indefinite sense of their number "twelve" as is applied to our term "a dozen," employed, most obviously, the number "ten" in that convenient sense: and consequently the number "five," being the half of ten, had, with them, the same indefinite force as our term "half a dozen." Thus the virgins representing the Jewish nation in Math. 25 : 2, were ten; and of course five of the ten were wise, and five were foolish. So also the number of the Samaritan woman's husbands was, as I conceive, not precisely and literally five,—but indefinite. So also in Leviticus 26 : 8, "five of you shall chase a hundred," is an expression equivalent to "half a dozen shall put a thousand to flight." The brethren of Dives, still living on the earth after his decease, were five or an indefinite small number. Other instances of the probable indefiniteness of the numbers "ten and five" might be adduced. The apocalyptic period of "five months," assigned to the locusts, does probably express,—not the rigidly exact number of prophetic days (historical years) contained in that number of months,—but *the proportion* which five bears to the indefinite small number "ten." In some instances however, the emblematical import of numbers must have had a more mystical origin, proceeding, I conceive, from that singular faculty and disposition of the mind, whereby it seeks, after the mode of analogy, to institute a similarity and comparison between dissimilar things. The peculiar human endowment of speech and language, or the power of expressing thoughts by signs, is primarily concerned in the exercise of this faculty. Number and bulk are but different denominations of quantity. Bulk, therefore, and number are synonymous in the mind's cal-

culations: and this synonymy constitutes the analogy between geometry and arithmetic: assimilating the two sciences, and constituting their equality of power in the operations and processes of reasoning, or of logarithms. Geometry does but measure, what arithmetic enumerates: and thus the figures of both become apt symbols or signs. From the adoption of signs, necessarily employed in men's simplest communications by speaking, the peculiar or human faculty proceeded to the invention of symbols or of writing. By a parallel employment of the faculty the mind perceives a kind of relation or an analogy between *moral* things and the *metaphysical properties* of material things; desiring to contemplate its moral perceptions or *sentiments* after the grosser mode of *sense*; and in the attempt to realise them, it resorts to these analogies, as the comparison of moral things with physical; and so it proceeds to express moral *attribute* by physical *property*, and the *divine* essence and attribute by its *human image*, and even by *symbol*. By this power of analogy the uses and applicability of certain geometrical figures (such as the circle, the square, and the equilateral triangle) and of certain arithmetical proportions (such as 2, 4, 7, $3\frac{1}{2}$, 3) were made to represent—first, the abstract qualities of physical property: then, of moral attribute; and afterwards, the invisible things of the unknown and spiritual world. And this latter application of the faculty happening to furnish a convenient occasion to the conceits of superstition, the things of the spiritual world were, in the progress of delusion and vain pretension, asserted and supposed to be mysteriously shadowed in types furnished by the metaphysical or unsubstantial properties and affections of the things of the material world. In this, or in some such way, men came to have a solemn apprehension of the truth of their own imaginations and inventions. Numbers, therefore, from a very early age, had become terms of hieroglyphical or emblematical language and science amongst men. And the Apostle, in employing them as characters of a composition avowedly figurative, used them, of course, in the sense scientifically and popularly proper to them, and consistently with the various other figures employed in the book. The mystical signification of each number employed was, therefore, not arbitrarily determined by the pro-

phetic writer : but each number was adopted by him from the language of preceding prophets treating of the same subject, particularly of the Prophet Daniel, or on the authority of scientific and conventional popular use. I do not mean to deny that the Apostle employed new combinations to express his particular designs : but such new combinations must have borne a relation to certain standard numbers, whereto they bore some natural or obvious proportion, or which enjoyed, by popular reputation, a mystical significancy and fixed emblematical force. If the apocalyptic numbers were not subjectable to some such rule and principle of interpretation, I cannot conceive what the prophet could possibly have meant by saying (when he declared the number 666 to be characteristic of the two-horned or lamb-like beast) "here is *wisdom* ; let him that hath *understanding* declare the number of the beast." I presume, then, that though the number "ten" acquired its emblematical signification in a very natural way, as above intimated, yet the number "seven" originated in pure mystery, as I have endeavoured to show : and that its mystical force has some deep allusion either to divine or to diabolical agency. And the true force of the very singular number "three and a half," the moiety of "seven," is to be deduced from its arithmetical proportion to its relative, and not from its numerical or chronical signification. Thus, "three days and a half" (during which period the dead bodies of the witnesses lay exposed in the streets of the great city) does not represent, I conceive, any precise period of time ; but in some mystical or figurative sense, refers to the arithmetical proportion of three and a half to seven. By parity of reasoning, "three years and a half" or forty-two months," or "twelve hundred and sixty days" (during which time the persecuted woman was to be nourished in the wilderness) does not, I conceive, rigidly define any exact number of historical years : and I altogether incline to believe that the period has entire reference to Elijah's sojourn in the wilderness, which, though literal with respect to *him* as a type, cannot be literal in the antitype. For, I hold it to be a correct and universal principle, that *no type whatever can receive its fulfilment in a literal sense* : and this maxim or principle may serve to assist the disciple or student of scripture in determining

many other questions of biblical argument than those of apocalyptic interpretation. In the same manner I conceive it to be a sound apocalyptic maxim and irrefragable truism, that in every instance the signification of the various apocalyptic figures is universally figurative, and never literal.

By this train of reflection, and adhering strictly to this *principle* of interpretation, I am led to conclude that the number "666" characteristic of the *two-horned* beast in chap. 13 : 8, is altogether a *mystical* number, having its true interpretation in the mystical law of *proportion* : and consequently that its meaning is not to be discovered by the popular mode—viz., a literal spelling of the very name of the personage intended. It is observable that each of the three ciphers of that very peculiar and apparently significant, though mysterious number, is a proportion, *a moiety*, of the mystical number "twelve." And I conceive, that as the number "twelve," being a number of great arithmetical excellence, is the apocalyptic symbol of *perfection*, and is for that reason appropriated to the church of Christ, and the things belonging to it ; so the spurious church is designated, in the language of symbol by *the half* of twelve : and that as *integrity* designates *the truth*, and as *the whole number doubled* (twenty-four) or *squared* (a hundred and forty-four) designates the collective tribes of spiritual Israel,—so *deficiency*, or the *half* number *squared* or *triplicated*, designates the sacrilegious *imitation* of truth, even spurious Christianity, or rather the establishment of *the false teachers* of spurious Christianity. The triplication of the number "6" has reference, I conceive, to the mystical force of its root—the number "3." That number is applied in a future chapter to the officials of Antichrist—viz., to the three unclean spirits—the three frogs—which are to instigate the kings of *the earth* to a great and final contest with *the word of God* or the spirit of truth. And as I imagine the number "three" must, in that place, refer significantly to the *spiritual* character of the mystery of iniquity ; and as the apocalyptic number "three" has never, in a single apocalyptic instance, any other than a bad significancy, conformably with its force in *modern magic* and diablery ;—so, I imagine, the triple combination of the *half* of twelve is but a varied application of the

same sacred symbol to the same character of sacred and divine execration.* In some such way must the number 666, as I conceive, be interpreted. When we shall arrive at the passage where the number occurs, I shall speak a few words in objection to the popular mode of literal interpretation or spelling of the name.

So much for the numerical, or, rather, the arithmetical, characters of the Apocalypse. And I now return to the point whence I digressed—viz., the seven heads of the *ten*-horned beast.

I conclude, then, that the prophet's allusion to the mountains, and governments of Rome, in his interpretation of *the heads* of the beast, determines nothing more than the ordinary reputation of the Satanic empire, commonly designated by the seven mystical mountains, where, under all its varying forms, it had raised its blasphemous head.

When this beast had emerged from *the sea*, or the political commotions of the world, the Devil, who had lately sustained a deadly wound in the loss of his national establishment of Pagan faith—his old Pagan instrument of rule,—now gave his authority and influence to the new christian establishments, in the institution of "*the holy Roman or German empire of the Cæsars*," instituted by Charlemagne, and transmitted by him to his successors, even to the present day. And thus the Devil's "deadly wound was healed:" or the loss sustained by him in the downfall of Paganism and of the Western empire, was repaired by the influence which, through the instrumentality of spurious Christianity, he acquired over the independent sovereignties of the Western division of the partitioned empire of Rome. For, the prophet "*saw one of the heads of the dragon wounded to death: and his deadly wound was healed:*" and so this, the

* It may, perhaps, be worthy of remark, that in the original Greek text there is no such alliteration or triplication of the number "six," as "666." The Greek *alphabetical letters*, constituting *the numerals* amounting to that singular number, are *four*, and are exceedingly different, in appearance, from any such alliteration or triplication. These four Greek letters are χ , ξ , σ , and τ : the two last being written in the combined form of a diphthong; that is, of two letters united in one. In making this remark, I do not at all mean to insinuate any apprehension of an implied difference of signification from that of the common numerals, 666: I merely state a fact: and if I meant to express any doubt on the subject, I should not hesitate to say so.

restored and last form of the empire, constituted "*an eighth head*" of the beast : yet "*was it of the seven, and goeth into perdition :*" that is—in the termination of this restored form, the Western Roman empire will finally and utterly perish.

"All the world admired the beast ;" that is, acquiesced in the newly formed establishment of the political constitution and association of the independent kingdoms of the Western empire. And this unison of national policy amongst the several nations of the new imperial arrangement indicated a community of religious persuasion or *ecclesiastical communion* or common spirit of error which rendered their several kingdoms the facile and combined agents of Satan : who accordingly, inspiring one superstition into each independent civil sovereignty, prompted all their united and civil measures against the truth and true servants of God. Forty and two months, i. e., twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days, or (as commentators will have it) historical years, was this civil establishment to prosper or prevail But, *so various or uncertain does THE COMMENCEMENT of this period appear to be, from the various passages of the Apocalypse wherein the period is mentioned,—that FROM THIS CIRCUMSTANCE ALONE, even if there were no other argument assigning a reason for the opinion, I should conclude that no absolutely specific number of historical years was intended by the prophet for the period of Anti-christ's reign ; but that the specified period was chiefly meant to assure the servants of God that the time of their sufferings or cruel oppression was DIVINELY MEASURED.* Blasphemy, whether manifested in the Pagan worship of republican and imperial Rome, or in the spurious profession of truth under the later emperors, had ever characterized the Roman empire under all its forms. And this last form being equally opposed to the truth—the beast, i. e., the new political establishment of the Western empire, "opened his mouth in blasphemies against God and his tabernacle" or the church of Christ. "It was given to him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them ;" that is, the true servants of God were to be persecuted and utterly proscribed in every part of the new empire, or in every one of its independent civil *sovereignties*. But God's servants are consoled with the assurance that the period of their oppression was to terminate :

for, He whose providence rules the world, would visit with the retributive judgment of persecution, oppression, and destruction, this and every other *civil* power that should oppress them. The belief of this assurance of deliverance was to support their patience; chap. 13 : 10.

The prophet, having thus described the origin and establishment of a diabolical *civil* polity, or the rise of the beast with seven heads and ten *crowned* horns out of *the sea*, or the commotions of the political world, proceeds to describe the rise of *another beast*, or *spiritual or ecclesiastical* power, out of *the earth*, or out of the new civil establishment of the restored Western Roman empire. And it is a matter of essential importance to the clear understanding of this intricate, interesting, and peculiarly instructive part of the prophecy, that the true nature of this second power should be fully comprehended, and not confounded with that of the first.

The time had now arrived when Antichrist or *the spiritual establishment of THE TEACHERS* of spurious Christianity (which person of Antichrist or false teaching had existed in embryo *even in the days of the Apostles*) was now to manifest himself in ample and *ecclesiastical* development; and the child of heresy was to attain the full stature of *the man of sin*. This its maturity was to be seen in its exalting itself above the supreme *civil* power, providentially ordained of God; or (as the Apostle Paul expressed it) “above all that *is called* God or that is worshipped (revered): so that he, sitting *as God* in the Temple of God, was to show himself to be *God*.” That is, Antichrist or the false teachers of spurious Christianity, usurping “a lordship over God’s heritage,” was to exercise sovereign authority over men’s consciences, acting as sovereign and civil magistrate in matters purely spiritual; and also as compulsive controller of *the civil agent himself*, who is instituted by God *the representative or civil agent of deity* in maintaining the moral peace of civil society: and thus was Antichrist to claim a divine right to enforce compliance *in the church*. Thus was antichrist to usurp both the throne of Messiah’s kingdom, and the throne of God’s providential ministers of civil authority. Such an usurpation of *absolute power* in spiritual affairs, it manifestly never could

have effected, except by raising itself superior even to the civil supreme magistrate. The chief obstacle which had hitherto impeded this supreme exaltation, must necessarily have been (exclusively of the personal authority of the Roman emperors) the establishment of Paganism on the imperial throne; which till then had stood ascendant, effectually barring any attempt on the part of the christian clergy to exercise civil authority in support of their spiritual tyranny. It is evident that the Roman emperors themselves stood not at all a sufficient bar to the political elevation of Antichrist; because the Emperor Charlemagne and his successors have been the great support of Popery; nor could the Popes of Rome, nor indeed any provincial prelate, have obtained or secured their ecclesiastical tyranny unless the civil power had supported them. And therefore we see in the Apocalypse that the rise of *the two-horned beast LIKE A LAMB WAS PRECEDED by the rise of the seven-headed and ten-horned beast wearing crowns on his horns.* We also see that *another* Antichrist or spiritual christian tyranny existed in the *Eastern* Roman empire, under the auspices of the very emperors themselves: though in the East it never attained to a height of spiritual power equal to that which prevailed in the West, where there had latterly existed no *imperial* personage to control the Bishop of Rome. “And now ye know” (says Paul to the Thessalonians) “what withholdeth that he (the man of sin) should be revealed “in his time:” that is,—ye know, from what I have personally told you, what it is, that prevents him, *even at this present time*, from manifesting himself: “for, the mystery of iniquity doth “already work; * only he who *now* hindereth, will hinder until “he be taken out of the way; and *then* shall that wicked one be “revealed; whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of “his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: “even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all

* It may here be observed, that the authority of the false teachers, in the spurious churches *then*, even in the very days of the Apostles, established in opposition to them and to the apostolic churches, must have been in a most forward state; and the spurious churches must have been far more populous than the apostolic churches; since the Apostle declares that *even then* the false teachers were in circumstances capable of aspiring to a spiritual tyranny over their flocks.

“power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” Most commentators suppose, that the old Roman empire was the power that “let” or hindered the revelation of the man of sin, in the Apostles’ days: whereas there was, in fact, a necessity of *restoring* the empire, in order to establish Antichrist in his pretensions. Paganism, as long as it held its seat of ascendancy, presented an obvious and absolute impediment to the establishment or ascendancy of *any other religion* or of *any christian sect*. But on its subversion we see plainly that “he, who in his time had hitherto physically hindered the manifestation of the man of sin, was now taken out of the way.” It is the rise of this singular and spiritual or ecclesiastical power, which the prophet is about to describe.

John “saw *another* beast come up,” not as did the last beast out of *the sea*, but “out of *the earth*: and he had two horns LIKE A LAMB, but he spake AS THE DRAGON. And he exerciseth all the power of *the first* beast before him,” which had lately risen up out of *the sea*; “and causeth *the earth*, and them which dwell therein, to worship *the first* beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from *heaven* on *the earth*, in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on *the earth* by those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast” with seven heads and ten crowned horns; “saying to them that dwell on *the earth*, that they should make *an image* to (of) the beast which had the wound by a sword, and did live. And he had power to give life to the image, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might *buy* or *sell*, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that

“hath understanding count the number of the beast : for, it is
“the number of *a man* : and his number is 666.”

In this paragraph it is very observable that the prophet abstains with peculiar care from the use of pronouns ; repeating the substantive with such pointed perseverance as to demonstrate his extreme solicitude to protect the reader from all ambiguity respecting the various personages intended by him ; and showing the great importance of the reader's accuracy and precision of application.

The paragraph just quoted furnishes a good opportunity of presenting the reader with a specimen of the simple principle of translation which I originally proposed for the interpretation of the prophet's language ; and which *principle* I have employed throughout these pages. The following paraphrase furnishes such specimen.

John “saw another kind of political power arise,—not as did
“the preceding power, out of the commotions of the political
“*world*,—but out of the new *civil establishment* of the holy
“Roman or Carlovingian empire. This second power was of a
“spiritual or rather an ecclesiastical nature, professing itself to
“be *Christianity* or the kingdom of *the Lamb* : and yet its im-
“perious and ferocious tone was that of the persecuting tyranny
“of *Paganism* or of *the dragon*. This ecclesiastical establishment
“of spurious but now Catholic Christianity, causes all the sub-
“jects of the Western kingdoms to recognise the Carlovingian
“or holy Roman empire, which had lately risen out of, and had
“terminated, the commotions of the world, in which the old
“Roman empire of the West had fallen *by the sword* of the
“Goths, Huns, Vandals, &c. In return for this service of
“Western Catholic Christianity (to which religious interest
“Charlemagne was largely indebted for his successful career
“and the voluntary acquiescence of Western Europe in the
“establishment of his empire) the Emperor Charlemagne ac-
“quiesced in the spiritual and ecclesiastical claims of the chris-
“tian hierarchy or *two-horned beast* which had the similitude
“or pretensions of *the Lamb* or of Christianity. For, the two-
“horned beast (the clerical or ecclesiastical power of the spiritual
“*establishments* of the Western christians) proceeds to create a

“SPIRITUAL EMPEROR, that is, to make AN IMAGE or spiritual
 “imitation of THE CIVIL EMPEROR; and causes the fire of the
 “civil or imperial vengeance to descend upon the refractory, who
 “should refuse to recognise this spiritual emperor, the papal
 “power, the spiritual imitation or image of the civil emperor or
 “the modern empire of the Cæsars. This spiritual emperor
 “(the Pope) was a device of the ecclesiastics or of the national
 “religious establishments of the teachers of spurious Christianity,
 “to promote their purposes of ambition, avarice, and corrupt
 “pretensions to spiritual dominion. And such was the uni-
 “versal or catholic influence of the christian hierarchy over
 “men’s minds, that they were able to impart a civil existence
 “(life) to this their spiritual creation, the Popedom,—THE IMAGE
 “of the civil emperor; enabling it to speak great swelling words
 “of vanity (see Daniel) or to make good its spiritual pretensions
 “to authority over all ranks from the king to the peasant, in the
 “various states of Western Rome, or to Roman Catholic domi-
 “nion,—by pronouncing outlawry or the loss of all civil pri-
 “vilege or civil life upon whosoever refused to recognise the
 “divinity of the papal pretensions. This outlawry or privation
 “of civil privilege is expressed by ‘causing that no man might
 “buy or sell, save him that had the mark of the beast.’”

Adhering strictly to my principle of interpretation,—such, I say, is a fair and easy translation of the hieroglyphical text: and on this principle would I translate the whole book.

Persuaded as I am, that the prejudices of my Protestant readers will induce, or have generally induced them to interpret both these two beasts to be the Church of Rome, I deem it necessary to contend that neither of them exactly represents the Church of Rome in particular, nor indeed any other particular church, nor even any church; for, the concession of the term “the church” to the teachers of Christianity is preposterous. More especially must I protest against that confusion which would identify two beasts laboriously and minutely distinguished by the prophet. The two beasts are manifestly two distinct, though leagued powers: nor is it reasonable to suppose that the prophet would have made so marked a distinction between them, unless there were a real and important difference. And I con-

tend that they signify respectively the *civil* and the *ecclesiastical* establishments of the component nations of the Western world: The beast with *seven heads and ten crowned horns*, and rising out of *the sea*, represents that civil and political establishment of the Western kingdoms, which, subsequently to the overthrow of the old Western Roman empire, was raised out of its ruins amidst the commotions of its component nations, in the independent national settlements of each: and particularly that association of them which received the appellation of “the German or holy Roman empire:” and which imperial association all the Western nations more or less contributed to, or partook of. And the beast *like a lamb*, and having *two horns* (*civil and spiritual power*) I contend is simply the *ecclesiastical* domination and *spiritual oppression* of the many ecclesiastical establishments of the teachers (the false prophet) of Christianity. The specific and only difference between the lamblike beast and the false prophet is—that the false prophet, or the self-instituted teachers of spurious Christianity, was *always*, even from the days of the Apostles, *a false teacher*; but he was *not always* a political power or *a beast*. The spiritual or ecclesiastical establishment of the teachers of the christian nations, having originated in primitive error and heretical disobedience to apostolic authority, grew slowly in corruption, bigotry, and superstition; subjugated the minds of mankind to its religious pretensions and besotting influence;—at length insinuated itself into the seat of ascendancy which the fall of Paganism had left vacant; obtained for itself exclusive privilege and absolute monopoly;—matured its growth, and usurped an authority to control the civil sovereign himself;—exercised its usurpation with tyranny, persecution, and blood;—and by an unwearied persistency in encroachment, obtained finally the highest possible summit of exaltation, erecting a spiritual monarch in imitation (the image) of political or civil empire: which spiritual monarchy trampled upon every, even upon the supreme (“most high”) civil office instituted by God’s providence in society. And thus grew Antichrist (“who existed numerously even in the days of the Apostle John”) and gradually developed himself; the faithless *becoming a heretic*; the heretic a bigot; the bigot a tyrant;

and the tyrant a despot. Thus it appears, that though *the two-horned and lamblike beast* signifies the political establishment of *the false teachers of Christianity* IN ANY AND ALL THE KINGDOMS OF WESTERN EUROPE,—yet the creation of a *spiritual emperor* in the person of the Bishop of Rome, determines the *spiritual tyranny* of *the image* to *POPERY* and to *THE CHURCH OF ROME*. Now; in the description above delineated by the prophet, *THREE* objects are distinctly presented to view—viz., *the beast with ten crowned horns* ;—*the lamblike beast with two horns* ;—and *an image* of the beast with ten horns. The first of these three powers existed before the second ; and the second before the third. Each therefore of the three must be distinct from the other two. The beast with ten horns we have already stated to be *the political or civil establishments* in which the Western nations of the late Roman empire had now newly settled themselves under the German or holy Roman empire restored or instituted by Charlemagne. The lamblike beast with two horns I presume to be *the ecclesiastical establishments* of the false teachers of Christianity in the various Christian nations throughout the Western world : and which false teachers had existed, in a rudimental form of Antichrist, in the heretical or spurious churches associated everywhere in the days of the Apostles themselves, in opposition to them : and which had now, by the fall of Paganism in all countries, prevailed with exclusive or ascendant national privilege. At a much later period of the christian era these national churches assumed various forms, whether *Roman catholic*, *Protestant catholic*, or otherwise. And commonly these clerical or ecclesiastical establishments are called, by the advocates of each persuasion and by a singularly arrogant and improper assumption, *the church*. Lastly, *the image* of the ten-horned beast I take to be *that spiritual monarchy or emperor* which the teachers of spurious and political christianity, or *the lamblike beast*, fabricated in imitation or *imagery* of the civil emperor of the newly-modelled Roman Western empire of Charlemagne and his successors. *The image* is the *Roman or papal tyranny*.

This *lamblike* beast with two horns rose up out of the earth : whereas the beast with *ten* horns rose up out of the sea. For,

the newly-established *kingdoms* or civil establishments of the Western Roman world had lately emerged out of the political commotions and mutations in which the old Western Roman empire had sunk: and these political commotions of *the world* are represented by *the sea*. But spurious and tyrannizing *Christianity* prospered and prevailed by a *settled and fixed* state of the nations: some of them (the Franks and the Saxons for instance, and the Normans or Danes, who established several kingdoms in Europe) not having even embraced Christianity till *after* their conquests were made, and some of their kingdoms established. The Pagan nations of the North who invaded South-eastern Europe, soon adopted the religion of the conquered: and thus it was, that "*the earth*," or the various provinces of the old Roman empire, "opened her mouth and "swallowed up the flood" which the Devil had vomited when he sent forth the various barbarian hordes that deluged the old Roman world. For these reasons, the second or lamblike beast is said to rise up out of *the earth*, which, in contradistinction from *the sea*, represents a settled or *established* state of the nations, and especially of *the Roman empire*, whose specific designation is "*the third part of the earth*."

The *likeness* of this beast to a *lamb* must at once strike every reader as a representation of false profession or spurious Christianity. And a *horn* being the scriptural emblem of political exaltation and sovereignty, I suppose the *two* horns of the lamblike beast represent *the union of SPIRITUAL AND CIVIL POWER*, constituting the usurpation of *ecclesiastical* authority; and are also, perhaps, an emblem of *proportion and divine power* (like the number "two" of the witnesses) pertaining, *of right*, to the truth,—and, *by correctness of imitation*, to the counterfeit. And thus the symbolical number "two" is applied by the prophet both to the true and to the spurious church.

This lamblike beast "spake" or domineered "as the dragon" or *Pagan Roman empire* had spoken: which, in chap. 20: 2, is expressly declared to be Satan. And Satan having been a liar from the beginning, or the father of all subsequent lies or false religions,—it is appropriately declared of this beast, which *presents the false and political Christianity* which is "of this

world," that "he *spake* or tyrannized "as the dragon" had spoken, and as the Devil prompted him ; uttering his legislative decree in the creation of the image or of a Pope issuing his bulls or rescripts to every nation of Western Europe.

This second or lamblike beast exercises all the power of the *first beast* with seven heads and ten crowned horns, which rose up before him: that is, spurious Christianity (or rather the teachers of spurious Christianity) got itself exclusively established by law in every kingdom: and the civil powers of the various nations, thus ridden by a satanic spirit, supported the usurped authority, false pretensions, and cruel principles of their rider. And in this way, teachers of spurious Christianity directed the measures of all governments according to the dictates and persecuting spirit of religious bigotry and ecclesiastical corruption and tyranny.

"He also caused the earth, and them that dwell therein, to worship the *first beast*, whose deadly wound was healed," i. e., the beast with ten crowned horns,—the German or holy Roman empire. "To worship" is an emblematical term signifying to honour and acknowledge: and as kings and other supreme governors are figuratively called God, inasmuch as they are civil representatives or ministers (however deplorably they too often abuse their divine commission)—so, to honour the king is figuratively expressed by "worshipping God:" in which sense the term is used by the Apostle Paul, who, speaking of this man of sin, says—"he exalteth himself above all that is called God or that is worshipped." And again—"though there be, that are called God, yet," &c. The Prophet John himself, when speaking of the downfall of Paganism, rejoices at the downfall of him who "accused our brethren to our God day and night;" that is, who unceasingly prompted the emperors to persecute the professors of Christ as wicked men and bad subjects. In this sense, too, Daniel employs the term "most high," when speaking of this very subject. The reader will at first probably be startled at hearing an earthly power called "most high." Yet the reader himself scruples not to speak familiarly of "the supreme power," when contemplating the civil authorities, legislative or executive. Now, "supreme" and "most high," are absolutely and grammatically

tically synonymous terms. Therefore by "causing the earth and "them that dwell therein to *worship* the first beast," it is meant that spurious Christianity or the influence of its ecclesiastical establishment of teachers, inspired all ranks in all the newly-established and independent kingdoms of the Western world with an unanimity of religious and political sentiment; cementing them, independent and heterogeneous though these kingdoms were, in a kind of religious confederacy, conducing to, and even demanding, uniformity of civil and ecclesiastical operation, and a compliance with imperial or general political and religious requisition. This is particularly exemplified in the confederacy called "the German or holy Roman empire," first established by Charlemagne, "*who renewed in his person the empire of the Cæsars under the title of ROMAN EMPEROR OF THE "WEST"* (the very terms employed in Puffendorf's history): which empire combined many of the states of Western Europe by league; and more or less included *all* of them in common interests or objects (see Gibbon's history, and the note at page 126 of this commentary.) Certainly it was the religion and ecclesiastical polity common to these states that effected such things: and thus the Catholic clergy or the false prophet caused *all the earth*, or all the kingdoms of the Western Roman empire, including even the kings of the nations however refractorily disposed, to recognise the imperial authority which protected the papal power in its usurpation of spiritual empire.

This lamblike beast "doeth great wonders, so that he maketh *fire* come down "from *heaven* in the sight of men." This means I presume, that the establishment of false teachers (commonly called the ecclesiastical establishment or *the church*) by their religious influence and authority over the governments of all the states, called forth *the terrors of the civil power* to compel the submission of the people: and thus forced the states to become their instruments of persecution. It is remarkable that the Roman Catholic clergy, in their controversies with Protestants, when they are charged with putting Huss, Jerome, and others to death for heresy, endeavour to relieve themselves from the odious imputation, sometimes by retaliating the charge, and sometimes by *asserting that the Romish church never put or puts any heretic*

to death, but merely "*delivers him over to the civil power,*" which deals with the offender according to *its own* choice and power, and on its own responsibility. With respect to the latter of these two excuses, I will observe that it is a satisfaction to disciples, when the disputatious advocates of error and inhumanity, exclusively of an acknowledgment of their cruel indifference to barbarity, are thus unwittingly induced to testify their own condemnation by an acknowledgment corroborative of scriptural indication, thus characterizing the presumptuous league between the spiritual and temporal powers. With respect to the former of the two excuses, it must be admitted that the Church of Rome is not the only church that has thus instigated the civil powers to cruelty and blood. Protestant churches have done the same thing, and have sheltered themselves under the same miserable and shameful excuse. I may, however, justly repeat the palliation already pleaded for them in a former page—viz., the lesson of cruelty was learned by them at Rome, which instilled it into all her children. The practice, however, is no necessary part of *Protestant* principles: it is indeed an *inconsistency*: whereas, of the Church of Rome, the cruel practice is a natural and consequential result from *inhuman principle*, and is *still* pursued. I admit, however, that it is the very nature of a state-religion to employ compulsory or secular inducements or civil privation.

The mysterious power of Antichrist, or the lamblike beast, "advanced," as the Apostle Paul had foretold, "after the working of Satan, with all deceivableness of unrighteousness and all power and signs and lying wonders." Its progress of success at length reached the ultimate point of spiritual attainment. By its persistence in fanatical and fraudulent pretensions mankind were deceived, and their minds abandoned to a besotting stupidity; for, "God did send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie." Paralyzed, therefore, by the convictions of a debasing faith, and appalled by the dauntless pretensions of their infatuated pastors and ambitious and avaricious prelates, the world at length sank prostrate under a spiritual despotism, which bowed the neck even of kings, and trampled the very sceptre under its feet. The lamblike beast therefore "said to them that dwell on the earth" (that is—the ecclesiastical governments or

false teachers of the various Western nations or new Roman empire taught the people) "that they should make *AN IMAGE of the beast with ten horns*:" in other words—they proposed to institute a *spiritual emperor*, *IN IMITATION of the civil or Roman emperor*. "He had also power to give *life to the image* of the beast, that *the image* should *speak*, and cause all to be *killed* who refused to worship the image:" that is, the ecclesiastical establishments had religious influence enough throughout the Western Roman world to obtain political and civil authority for this spiritual emperor of their own creation, and to give him a *civil existence*; empowering him "to *speak great words against the most high*," or "*great swelling words of vanity*," i. e., of spiritual insolence against the *supreme civil magistrate*: thus exhibiting that extraordinary political phenomenon of a spiritual power "*exalting itself above the civil power, or above all that is called God, or that is revered*," as God's supreme providential minister of civil affairs: causing all to be *killed* (politically killed, i. e., outlawed) who refused "to worship the image," i. e., to recognise this spiritual emperor. In thus interpreting this passage, it is plain that consistency requires "*the giving life*" to the image to be contrasted with "*the killing*" of all who refused to worship it: and as "*the life*" is manifestly of a political nature, so "*the killing*" must be of a political nature also. In short the ecclesiastical powers succeeded in establishing *the spiritual empire of the papacy*, with a penalty of *civil death* or outlawry of all who refused to recognise the spiritual emperor. "It caused also that all ranks and conditions of men should publicly testify this their acknowledgment;" and that without such testification they should be debarred the privileges and protection of the laws; or, as the prophet figuratively expresses it, "that no man should *buy or sell* who had not the mark of the beast on his right hand or on his forehead," i. e., affecting all *his social dealings* and *civil privileges*.

Of the number 666 I have already spoken; and I think it *probable* that I have given at page 137 an interpretation approximating to the true signification. Its *application*, however, is sufficiently obvious and certain. I more than suspect that the *mode* which commentators have pursued, of interpreting the *mystical number* by certain letters of the Greek alphabet (which

letters are also the Greek *ciphers* or numeral characters ; and which, when *numerically* taken, constitute the number 666,—and when taken *literally*, the word “Lateinos”) does not yield the true meaning of the figure. It is true, indeed, that certain Greek alphabetical letters, capable of constituting *numerically* the number 666, do really constitute *alphabetically* the word “Lateinos” and also the synonymous Hebrew word “Rumith.” And Bishop Newton expresses his sincere admiration at the singular felicity of the coincidence of *the letters* and *the ciphers* respectively constituting *the words* and *the numbers*. However, an indefinite number of words, variously significant of popery, have been compiled by the industrious ingenuity of calculators, of letters constituting *numerically* the number 666 : too many indeed for the credit of that mode of interpretation. An inexperienced person will probably at first be struck with admiration at the singularity and felicity of the coincidence of the words with the number. But when after a while he comes to know that a score of such words have been accurately adjusted of *letters* composing this exact number ; and that a score more could in all probability be made to render the same service ; his admiration will greatly abate, and hesitation will probably be induced. I will content myself with observing to the scientific reader or one “that hath understanding,” that it is not consonant with the *principles* of so pure an allegory and consistent hieroglyphical composition as the Apocalypse, to represent by *numerical figures* or even by *alphabetical letters* THE LITERAL NAME of the thing signified. The names employed in the Apocalypse are always CHARACTERS, and not LITERAL APPELLATIVES, which are generally mere accidental denominations. Apollyon, for instance, was not the name of any historical person or nation : but it expresses the character of Mahometanism. Armageddon is not the veritable name of any PLACE : but it expresses the occasion of a great contest ; which occasion is signified by the figurative representation of the site or field of a great battle. That the papacy is not intended by the number 666, is manifest from the circumstance that the number is declared to be the number of the beast, and not of the image ; which latter emblem represents the papacy. That the number has no specific allusion to Rome,

is manifest from the circumstance that the context determines the number to the *lamblike* beast; which represents false or political Christianity, or rather *the clerical teachers* of the various establishments oppressing the people, in *any* quarter of the world, or Antichrist possessed of *civil* power, and exercising a civil tyranny; which Antichrist was certainly not particularly *Romish* when the Apostle John spoke of him as *existing numerously at that day*; whereas *Rome*, or the Western Roman empire, is designated by *the beast* with seven heads and ten crowned horns; as the Roman *papacy* is by *the image* of the beast with seven heads and ten horns. Moreover, *the Romish church* or *Roman Catholic ecclesiastical establishment* is represented under a different figure—viz., that of a woman clothed in scarlet, and *sitting upon* the beast with seven heads and ten crowned horns: which woman has the name of “*Babylon, mother of harlots,*” written upon her forehead. Did the Apostle mean to assign two or more distinct names or specific characters to one single object? Surely he would not have so confused his subject. Now, this Babylon is destroyed in the EIGHTEENTH chapter: but the beast with seven heads and ten horns, together with the false prophet (the national establishments of false teachers of Christianity in any or all the Western kingdoms, or the lamblike beast with two horns—as we shall presently see *the false prophet* to be—“who wrought miracles before the beast with “seven heads and ten horns, and who deceived them that had “the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image”) is not destroyed till we come to the NINETEENTH chapter. The various predicaments and complicated forms of the false christian establishments, with their civil government and ecclesiastical teachers, required different apocalyptic representations: and though they are all very similar, and in some respects nearly the same, yet their differences are important, and demanded absolute distinction. It is impossible, therefore, that *either of the two beasts* can be meant *exclusively to particularize* popery: and consequently the number of the lamblike beast—the number 666—must designate some other object than popery. That other object may nevertheless be something more comprehensive *than popery*, and inclusive of it, as well as of other systems of

error and tyranny, equally false in principle, though not so monstrous in practice. The prophet declares the number to be that of "a man;" *the man of sin*, I presume, or *the false prophet* (the clerical teachers of false Christianity throughout its many sects) *invested with a political character*; without any specific allusion to popery, which was an invention of the false prophet or the spiritual officials of spurious Christianity *after they had acquired* a political existence or ecclesiastical character; that is, *after they had obtained ascendancy or exclusive state favour, and had overmatched or rivalled the civil power.* *False Christianity*, or rather **THE TEACHERS of false Christianity, THE ANTI-CHRIST of the Apostle John's days, and who was indeed in his very origin A FALSE PROPHET OR TEACHER, became eventually THE FALSE PROPHET OF THE APOCALYPSE, or THE MAN OF SIN OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.** *This establishment of false spiritual officials, when it had superseded Paganism, and had obtained a CIVIL existence, or had become ASCENDANT in the various nations of the West was, I say, the lamblike beast of the Apocalypse. And this lamblike beast is represented as THEN making AN IMAGE for general worship or obedience WHEN the ecclesiastical power instituted THE PAPACY OR A SPIRITUAL EMPEROR. Thus THE PAPACY IS THE IMAGE: THE ECCLESIASTICAL ESTABLISHMENT is THE LAMBLIKE BEAST: and THE POLITICAL RE-ESTABLISHMENT of the Western empire by Charlemagne is THE BEAST WITH SEVEN HEADS AND TEN CROWNED HORNS. THE ROMISH CHURCH (a particular variety or modification of the national ecclesiastical establishments of spurious Christianity) is particularly represented BY A WOMAN CLOTHED IN SCARLET, AND SITTING ON THE BEAST WITH SEVEN HEADS AND TEN HORNS. For, this woman is declared to be that great city which, when the Apostle was writing, THEN reigned over the kings of the earth; and she had upon her forehead a name written—MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.* Now, this "mother of harlots" is so called, I presume, because she was the parent of many spiritually harlot and national religious establishments. The false prophet, therefore, is *primarily* the pretentious authority or ecclesiastical establishment of the false teachers of Christianity, or the spiritual officials who in Apostolic days renounced and usurped Apostolic authority.

and abolished the institutions of the Apostles in the churches as they are recorded in the writings of the Apostles ; and which Apostolic institutions are so recorded, I presume, IN ORDER THAT MEN MAY RETURN TO THEM WHENEVER THE DAY SHALL ARRIVE WHEREIN MEN SHALL ESSAY TO SEEK THE WILL OF THE LORD WHERE IT MAY BE FOUND. And when this false establishment in process of time acquired *political ascendancy*, THEN it became the *lamblike beast*. And so "the false prophet" is nearly the same as "the lamblike beast." The only, but an essential difference is—that the teachers of false Christianity were *always* a false prophet or *Antichrist*, but they were *not always* a *political*, i.e., an *ecclesiastical* establishment, or established *by the state* : they were not *always* a *beast*. Whatever view of these things induced the Apostle Paul to designate the then future development of the great apostacy by the term "*man of sin*," the same view must, I conceive, have determined the Apostle John to apply the same figurative term "*man*" ("for, it is the number of a *man*," chap. 13 : 18) to the same spiritual and tyrannical power when supremely exalted.

Irksome as must be the study of these things to the reader, and laborious the distinction of the various necessary representations made by the prophet, I must yet plead their great importance for the task which I have imposed upon myself and the reader. To the sincere inquirer and student of the Apocalypse I would put this very pertinent question :—can he believe that the prophet had not a distinct object in view for *each and every* different representation ; or can he think that the prophet would confuse his narrative of a most complicated subject by unnecessarily multiplying the representations of one and the very same object ? I conclude, therefore, that *each* of the figures employed throughout the prophetic history of Antichrist, and contained in the details of the seventh Trumpet or the seven Vials, has its proper and distinct antitype : nor can any two of the figures represent any purely single object. I have now done with the thirteenth chapter.

SEC. XV.—*Chapter XIV. of the Book of Revelation.—The Seventh Trumpet, or Third Woe.*

SPURIOUS Christianity having now prevailed over the various governments throughout the Western Roman world; having succeeded in establishing itself ascendant by law with exclusive privilege, subjecting and coercing even the civil magistrate: and having finally erected a spiritual monarchy or despotism unparalleled in the annals of mankind:—its empire was destined to flourish and decline through a long succession of ages. But the church of God during all this time was to be the jewel of his ceaseless care; transmitting the lustre of his truth to happier times: and through the darkness of this long and dreary night the day-star of promise was ever to dawn in their hearts (2 Pet. 1: 19—2 Pet. 3: 1, 2.) Previously, therefore, to his entering upon the detail of God's protracted dealings with his enemies; and as a contrast to the empire of tyranny or to the false church just delineated, the prophet gives, in the fourteenth chapter, a rapid sketch exhibiting God's people, the true church, supported even to joy by the presence of him who had promised never to forsake them. And for their sakes this fourteenth chapter is inserted by way of contrast, and also for the purpose of anticipating their steadfastness and the happy consummation of their impending conflict. The prophet "saw a lamb standing on Mount Zion (that Mount Zion which cannot be moved, but "which abideth for ever) and with him a hundred and forty "four thousand having their father's name inscribed on their "foreheads." The number allusive to the full complement of the tribes of God's ancient people is, of course, an emblematical representation of the church or kingdom of Christ: and the well-known and favoured mountain of Zion represents the firmness of that hope on which the church is elevated,—“the city “of Zion, built on the hill of Zion.” And as the subjects of the beast were lately described as publicly professing their allegiance by a mark on their foreheads; so are the servants of God represented as bearing their father's name as conspicuously. For, Christ had said, “whosoever confesseth me before men, him

“will I confess before my father.” They confessed him, therefore, and sang praise to his name. “But the song they sang could no man learn who was not of their number;” for, superstition can never impart the serene joy, the unshaken confidence, and the scriptural knowledge, which intellectual truth inspires. This company are described as being pure from the prevailing superstition; guiding themselves only by the compass of God’s word; incorrupt in principle, and unblemished before God (chap, 14: 4.)

An angel (one of three angels) is seen calling the attention of the christian or professing world to the *original and unchangeable* or “everlasting gospel” of truth. This annunciation, of course, means—that after a long period during which the written record or word of God had been suppressed and forgotten, recourse began again to be had to the *principles of truth* or to the *written documents of the unchangeable* or “everlasting gospel.” I conclude, therefore, that the *first* angel’s annunciation alludes to those occasional appeals to the written word of God, which were made during the midnight ages of darkness, against the prevailing superstitions of Christendom, the corruptions of its many churches, and the despotism of its teachers *the false prophet*; and which appeals prepared the minds of mankind for the great political and religious changes of THE REFORMATION. Of many of these appeals, doubtless, the memorial has perished from history, and now stands only in the records of heaven. Others of them made a greater noise in their day; and their report is transmitted to us (together, doubtless, with much misrepresentation, as well as with many true charges of error) in the names of the Paulicians of the ninth and subsequent centuries; of the Piedmontese dissenters in the tenth century; of Gerard in the reign of our Henry the Second; of the Albigenes; of Wickliffe; the Lollards; the Waldenses; Huss and Jerome; and their followers: previously I presume, to the period of Luther, when the papal power received its first great shock.

A second angel follows, and indeed a third. This second angel more probably, and, I conceive, most certainly, represents *the annunciation* of that great revolution which occurred in the *days and by the instrumentality* of Luther and others, his con-

temporaries. This second angel's proclamation announces, i. e., *anticipates*, THE FALL OF BABYLON or the ROMISH church, together with that of the Papacy or spiritual monarchy of Antichrist, by the visitation of God's providences. The *third* angel announces perhaps the progress and further changes of Protestantism, and the approximations of Protestantism to apostolic truth.

Whatever may have been the defects, merits, errors, or truths of Luther and other eminent reformers of his day; these do not concern my purpose, further than as their declamations against Rome's corruptions of Scripture and against her tyranny over men's minds and persons, were an appeal to THE UNCHANGEABLE TRUTHS OF GOD'S WRITTEN WORD—"THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL." *Reformation* of error and corruption must ever have its *commencement*: and that commencement must necessarily at first be on a small scale, i. e., with a partial and confused intelligence of *truth*. All that I desire to keep in view is—the letter of my text, viz., *the fall of Babylon* announced by the second angel. Luther, beyond all doubt, was the great battering engine of Popery: and the execration wherewith his name is honoured by the Papists to this day, is enough to prove my assertion. The reformers themselves called their own work BUT *a reformation*. They appear not to have had the faintest conception of the true nature of Christ's kingdom, that is, of its utter independence on the kingdoms or governments of "*this world*." However true their protest, and however heroic and admirable their devotedness, they thought, like the Apostles in the days of their early discipleship, that the kingdom of Christ was to be a thing "of *this world*," that is, a temporal establishment or state-institution, and to be supportable by temporal power, and governed by national or nationally sanctioned authorities, and regulated on civil and municipal principles. And this simple error, like every other error in principle, pervaded all their truths, leavening all their institutions, and begetting the direst calamities, corruptions, and cruel tyrannies. Their object, however, was what they professed it to be, viz., a return to *ancient catholic principles* by a correction of *modern Romish abuses* and a *reformation* of Rome's corrupt practices and doctrines. Nor can we so

much blame them for their shortcomings of apostolic principles, as praise them for their heroic assertion of apostolic truths. Believing the Romish church to have been founded on apostolic authority and institution, and that she was guilty only of *an abuse and perversion* of power, and of *corruption* of doctrine and practice, they advocated *merely a reformation* of that which really was, though they knew it not, *bad in principle*. Had they known that even *catholic perfection, simplicity, and purity*, if attained, were but *the point of primitive heresy, or divergence from apostolic obedience*, they never would have attempted to reform what ought (unless we could suppose a nation to be capable of spiritual regeneration) to have been *abolished*. But they never could have scripturally hoped to gain the world's approbation and conversion to *the truth as it is in Jesus*: or if the world had listened and even reformed,—true disciples alone would have confessed the truth of Christ by adopting the apostolic principles of true fraternal association dictated by true filial love of God, and by the scriptural precepts of apostolic rule or the written record. As well might Paganism be supposed capable, by the light of natural moral truth, of being *reformed* into Christianity,—as *Popery* or even *catholicism* be supposed capable, by religious *reformation*, of exhibiting the Church of Christ. Had the reformers known that even boasted *catholicity* is but “the world,” they never would have thought that *apostolic truth* or *the kingdom of Christ* could possibly have been *catholic*, or that *catholic perfection* could possibly have been *apostolic truth* or *Christ's kingdom*. Had they known, in short, what was and is *apostolic principle* and *legitimate or divine authority* they never could have hoped to return to it by retracing the steps of *Romish corruption*, which could but have conducted them to *catholic purity and simplicity*, that is, to *the point where primitive heresy had diverged from apostolic obedience and truth*, or from *the apostolic institution of discipleship*. A Roman catholic church establishment (viewed without reference to its enormities) differs little in principle from catholic establishment. It is but the difference of an empire from a kingdom. Roman catholicism is *imperial*, or the tyranny of one superior nation or monarch over the citizens of many inferior nations: *catholicity* is provincial, or the tyranny

of *each single nation* over *its own* citizens and *its many churches*. The civil government of the world was *imperial* when *Roman catholicity* was established: the governments were national when *the reformation* was established: and *primitive catholicity* was instituted long before any of *the provinces* of the Roman empire had become independent, and before *any governments* had become christian, and was therefore but an universal renunciation of apostolic authority. The corruptions of Rome were the produce of *the age*, i. e., of the Christian Western world under the old imperial Christian government of Rome, and the modern Roman empire by Charlemagne.

We may clearly see what enormities a *national*, and even a *Protestant* national establishment might produce in an age of social ignorance, by referring to the history of Scotland and her institution of *the covenant*. A more blasphemous conception than that of a nation's own *covenant* with God, or a more tyrannical church establishment than that of covenanting Presbyterianism, can scarcely be imagined: it often induced men to regret the dominion of Rome. In contending therefore for what they understood to be primitive simplicity, the Reformers were but undertaking to *regenerate catholic principle* or primitive heresy: and even success in the struggle was but starting afresh from the point of primitive divergence from apostolic institution, with a warning against Romish corruption and excess loud sounding in the historical precedents of Romish enormities and abominations. Such was the avowed and partial, though, I admit, at that time desirable object of the Protestant reformers. At this present day it is the boast of all the reformed churches that *they* are the *true catholics*: and their boast is, in a considerable degree, a just one; and the boast of most of the *dissenting* Protestant churches, and of all the popular ones, is—that *they* are the *correct models* of a *reformed* national church, or (as *they* think) of a *true church*: and their boast is probably, even according to the principles of *their own* views, an unjust one. For in *apostolic* days, no *primitive* church, whether apostolical or heretical, was ever a *national* establishment or church: and no *apostolical* church could possibly have been *national*. The very constitution of the primitive or apostolic churches, as they are

represented in the Epistles and Acts of the Apostles, was—independence of all external authority except that of the Apostles, or of the church where the Apostles resided. The primitive churches, like the Jewish synagogues of the present day, were independent congregations or synagogues. To be *catholic*, a *national* church must be, not only “of this world,” i. e., of a political, or civil, or temporal nature, but it must be general, i. e., prevalent over the nation and over the christian world: and consequently a modern *national* church establishment could not possibly be *apostolic* or *primitive*. Each APOSTOLIC church in Judea was independent of the Mosaic or NATIONAL establishment, which yet was an establishment of DIVINE APPOINTMENT: a fortiori, then, the *Gentile* churches of the present day are, or rather ought to be, independent of the *civil* power or *national* establishments. Each dissenting church at the present day would put *itself* forward as the most qualified candidate for state favour: at least it would arrogate a right to exercise over its own members an authority that must, if it were the successful state candidate, touch the civil privileges of men. And even if the state were to recognise two or more, or even many sects,—that very recognition must in some degree change the nature of a private institution into a public one, and of a purely *spiritual* authority into an *ecclesiastical* power. It is true that such *civil* power would or might influence only members of that particular church or sect; but if that sect became universal, or only very numerous, the civil privileges of an obnoxious or refractory member would be involved in the *spiritual* discipline of the ecclesiastical body: and his freedom of persuasion would plainly lie at the precarious mercy of a capricious sectarian principle; though the obnoxious member were in no respect obnoxious to the state, i. e., guilty of no crime. And though a national exclusive church, such as that now ascendant in any of the liberal Protestant states, can, or at least does, seldom exercise any such prejudicial influence over its obnoxious members; yet amongst dissenting bodies, which exercise commonly a more minute and vigilant superintendence of the orthodoxy and compliance of their members, such influence might easily operate in a degree that would be *felt most prejudicially* by the obnoxious, though perhaps innocent or meritorious, individual. Very few indeed are those

religious associations whose discipline or power of expulsion would be limited purely to the refusal of spiritual fraternity. These views constitute perhaps the best plea (bad indeed is the best) for the maintenance of the present experienced national churches in each Protestant country in this part of the world. For till mankind shall be fully instructed and persuaded of the distinctness and mutual independence of civil and religious interests, the prevailing sect will ever possess a prevailing argument for the continuation of the state's preference, in the necessity of repressing all competition for that state-preference. And this is the most reasonable argument for the acquiescence of all the dissenting sects in a national establishment of any one of the many denominations of Christianity.

The view, therefore, of the celebrated reformers of the sixteenth century conducted the reforming nations to the exact fulfilment of God's providential purposes against the Romanists. "The nations" (constituting, in their ecclesiastical capacity, the harlot children of the whore) "began to hate her;" to exercise upon Rome the cruelties practised by *her* upon others; and "into the cup which she had filled, to fill to her double." Accordingly "they stripped her naked, and eat her flesh, and burnt her with fire:" that is, (in the language of allegory and figure) they seized her spoils, appropriated her revenues, and bitterly persecuted her. And having thus restored a large portion of the Western christian world nearly to the state in which Christianity stood previously to the establishment of Popery, we now see them (the Protestant national churches) not as worshippers of *the image* made by the Lamblike Beast, that is, not as *Roman* or *Popish* catholics, but simply as *the Lamblike Beast* or CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY with its ecclesiastical or state-favoured establishments. And in this capacity of *the Lamblike Beast*, viewed as an *ecclesiastical* or *politico-religious* power:—and as the ten horns (or a portion of them) of *the seven-headed Beast* who "*began to hate the whore*" their spiritual mother,—viewed as a *civil* power,—they wait the further demonstration of God's providential purposes, as we shall see in the sequel.

Abhorrent as every truly christian man, and as every humane person must be, of retaliating the cruel persecutions of his

enemies; yet must the reflecting mind perceive, that such neither is, nor ought to be, the moral rule of Divine Providence. Therefore with humble admiration of God's providential ways, the disciple of Christ (when he contemplates the sufferings of the Romanists from the Protestant nations, and the just hatred and, what is more to the purpose, the just terror of Romish *principles*, and the just apprehension of Romish efforts to regain their lost dominion: which hatred, terror, and apprehension still justly pervade the breasts of Rome's once helpless victims) cannot but exclaim, "Thou art righteous, O Lord, because thou hast judged them thus; for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given *them* blood to drink, for they are worthy: true and righteous are thy judgments." I will add also, that the dissenting bodies of the Protestant party have just cause to apprehend the church-establishment of the Protestant states, whenever they see a tendency in the national prelates and clergy to return to, or to favour, *the principles* of Rome, even though they should abhor her abominations. Nor will the disciple of Christ be at a loss how to interpret the apocalyptic apostrophe to the Protestant nations,—“Reward her even as she rewarded you: and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double. How much she had glorified herself and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her. Rejoice over her, heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets: for, God hath avenged you on her.” The instructed disciple, I say, will not for a moment suppose that these emphatic terms are *preceptive*. They are the mere language of *prophecy*, thus expressing the righteous and retributive decrees of a just Providence, who has determined that moral *causes* shall produce their *opposite effects*: that a long term of malignant and systematic cruelty shall entail a long term of just retribution: that the providential and moral rule which governs mankind, visits naturally and necessarily upon the children the sins of their fathers: that upon them that accept the inheritance of a bad cause devolves the responsibility of them that bequeathed it to *them*: and that “all those who,” with a view of propagating or *of maintaining* the cause of Christ, “TAKE THE SWORD, SHALL,”

in the providential dispensation of Almighty God, "PERISH WITH THE SWORD." But when the disciple reads, not the *prophetic*, but the *preceptive* words of Christ, he finds that the moral rule delivered to the disciples by their master is the same which humanity dictates,—“love ye your *enemies*, and pray for “those that despitefully treat you and persecute you.” And this difference between the *precept* and the *apostrophe* marks a distinction in the divine estimate of the two parties thus dissimilarly addressed; and can be explained only by considering the one party as being truly, and the other as being spuriously, professors of obedience; that is, the one as being the subjects of *precept*, and the other merely of *prophecy*.

The annunciation made by the second angel, and indeed all similar annunciations, are not to be understood as though the events recorded by them *had then actually occurred*: but we are to understand them as intimating that the divine judgments *which are to effect these events* were then *about to be visited*, and are therefore pronounced in terms expressing *irrevocability*: it being the very style of prophecy to represent future events as already accomplished. This is manifest from the seven last verses of this fourteenth chapter, which are obviously a summary, *by way of anticipation*, of events *subsequently* detailed at full length in the chapter that follows. When therefore the eighth verse of this fourteenth chapter declares by the voice of the second angel, that “Babylon is fallen, is fallen”—an event is then merely announced, which is manifestly not accomplished till we come to the *eighteenth* chapter, when it is finally uttered, “Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen:” and that entire chapter is the dirge of her obsequies. Of course the chapters intervening *between* the 14th and the 18th describe the operations of the oppressing and of the oppressed parties. This being premised, the enigmatical declaration of the 12th and 13th verses of the fourteenth chapter becomes perfectly intelligible: “Blessed are “the dead which die in the Lord *from henceforth*: yea, saith “the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their “works do *follow* them.” The question occurs, why were they that die in the Lord particularly “*from henceforth*” blessed? *The obvious answer is*,—that such was the bitterness of perse-

cution which the prophet was about to detail in the history of Antichrist's monarchical or Papal reign and tyranny, and also in the history of the persecutions practised by the Protestant ecclesiastical and civil powers that succeeded to the dominion and cruelties of Popery.—that DEATH WOULD BE A JOYFUL RELIEF TO THOSE SUFFERERS WHO, amongst the many that suffered death and outlawry in those cruel times, *fell in the cause and confession of truth*: and that the prospect of deliverance presented to the suffering church of Christ in this predicted fall of the powers that oppressed it, was to support it through the protracted period of cruel persecution: and that those who should be called to suffer for, or to seal with their blood, their testimony to the truth of God, would at a future day (“and their works do follow them”) *be hailed by their descendants as the champions whose struggles had won the cause to which they sacrificed themselves*. The remaining seven verses of the fourteenth chapter anticipate, as I have said, the days when tyrannizing Christianity shall have filled up the measure of its sins, and shall be “ripe” for the divine judgments, which are to finish this varied mystery of iniquity. The harvest being now ripe, the time had come when it was to be reaped. So much for the fourteenth chapter.

SEC. XV.—*Chapter XV. of the Book of Revelation.—
Seventh Trumpet, or the Third Woe.*

ACCORDINGLY, the preliminary details of the condition both of the true church and of its adversaries having now been sufficiently furnished, the *fifteenth* chapter opens with a scene preparatory of judicial operation. Seven angels appear, having the seven last plagues of final execution of God's wrath upon persecuting and oppressing Christianity. And these seven angels (pouring out the seven vials) are the fulfilment of the seventh trumpet.

A scene is now exhibited, showing, if I mistake not, God's care to distinguish his servants, and protect them from satanic *malice amidst* the divine judgments in which his enemies are

about to be involved. I am led to this conclusion by adhering to a principle which has served to prompt me in several instances of interpretation which I have submitted to the reader—viz., by observing that there exists (as might naturally have been expected) *a conformity of plan and similarity of judicial incident characterizing each of the three series* of providential and national judgments predicted in the Apocalypse. In *the seals* we found that, previously to the destruction of Jerusalem, there was represented, in the *third seal*, a special providence watching over the servants of God, and cautioning the Angel of Desolation “not to hurt the wheat, barley, oil, or wine.” And again, in the *fifth trumpet*, previously to the destruction of the Eastern Roman empire by the Saracens and Turks, we found that the Mahometan invasion was forbidden to “hurt or kill those that had the seal of God on their foreheads.” And now in *the vials*, or third and last series of God’s providential judgments, previously to his judicial operations we are about to find a similar representation of God’s special providence in protecting his servants amidst the moral and political calamities about to be visited on the nations obnoxious to his displeasure. As we know most certainly that such is God’s regard of his servants (Luke 21 : 18), we might almost conclude that such *would be* a part of the apocalyptic plan.

The servants of God, then, are represented as “standing upon a sea of glass mingled with fire : and there they sing the song of *Moses* and of *the Lamb*.”

To understand this “sea of glass,” the reader must refer to the fourth chapter or opening of the Revelation ; where a representation is given of the presence of God. Amongst many emblems there furnished, and figurative of God’s various attributes, one is painted in the sixth verse of that chapter representing his *omniscience and omnipresence*. “There was before the throne *a sea of glass like unto crystal*.” The emblem simply and briefly asserts that *all mundane nature is clear to God’s providential ken* ; and that this world, its troubled elements and multifarious transactions, are *pervious* to the sight, and *present* to the gaze of Him whose “throne is the heavens, and the earth his footstool.” When therefore the servants of God are repre-

sented as "*standing on a sea of glass*" (which stood before the throne) "*mingled with fire*," we are to understand that while the fire of divine wrath and human passion was to rage to conflagration upon the elements of national strife and political uproar,—the servants of God were to see, in the contentions and calamities of their enemies, the operation of their own providential deliverance; and in the confidence of their trust they were to rejoice in the expected issue of these evils. The passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea, whose waters overwhelmed the pursuing host of Pharaoh,—and on whose shore the people "*sang the song of Moses*," or praised God their Saviour for deliverance, is a figure of the transactions now recorded. And the Red Sea itself is a type analogous to the emblem of "*the sea of glass mingled with fire*." I will not positively assert that the colour ("red") appellative of the one sea, was intended to represent the fire descriptive of the other. Both are mere figures; the one a type, the other an emblem. There is indeed throughout the detail of the seven last plagues or vials of wrath, a manifest allusion to the plagues of Egypt, and the deliverance of the Israelites from their house of bondage. Amidst the operation of these visitations, the servants of God are represented as singing the song of *Moses*, which is declared to be also the song of the *Lamb*. Now, the song of *Moses* was the exultation of the Israelites on the overthrow of their oppressors: "Sing unto God: the horse and his rider hath he overthrown in the sea." We cannot doubt therefore that the theme of the song of the *Lamb* anticipates the overthrow of the anti-christian tyranny. In the prospect of this confident, though distant hope, their strength was supported.

So palpable indeed is the allusion of the vials to the plagues of Egypt, that in seeking their interpretation we may consider it possibly to have been the prophet's intention to make these vials comply, for pure conformity's sake, with the judgments of *Moses*' rod. Or rather (which indeed is but the same thing) we may consider the plagues of Egypt to have been a provision of types of the providential judgments visited upon the anti-christian oppressors of Christ's disciples or kingdom. For this reason, and more especially for the reason that God's ordinary

mode of providential interference in the affairs of mankind naturally leads us to expect a certain similarity or conformity between the providential judgments of all the three series of the seals, trumpets, and vials, I conclude that we are not to look for a more minute and particular or different kind of interpretation of the few first or leading vials, than we found for the few first and leading seals and trumpets. I therefore presume that the *five* first vials, like the *four* first seals, and the *four* first trumpets, express generally and simply the *moral, civil, national, religious, and intellectual* evil condition necessarily consequent upon, or at least natural to, a superstition and polity bigoted, cruel, and besotted in its nature; and to a state of society debased by such superstition, and influenced by it to injustice, tyranny, persecution, impolicy, and abuse of the natural or divine institutions and social ordinances of man. Such a state of society, in any nation, is the natural *cause* and certain *prelude* to national disaster and destruction, or woe.

The vials being virtually one more in number than the seals and trumpets, there exists one supernumerary vial descriptive of the causes of God's terminal judgments of each series. So much for the fifteenth chapter. I now therefore proceed to the sixteenth chapter, or the detail of *the seven vials*.

SEC. XV.—*Chapter XVI. of the Book of Revelation.—
The Five First Vials.*

FIRST VIAL.

The first vial is poured on *the earth* in noisome and *grievous sores* upon those who had the mark of the Beast.

SECOND VIAL.

The second vial is poured out on *the sea*, and it became blood.

THIRD VIAL.

The third vial is poured out on *the rivers and fountains*, and they became blood.

The fourth vial is poured out upon *the*
FOURTH VIAL. *sun* ; and it was given to scorch men
 with fire.

The fifth vial is poured out upon *the seat*
FIFTH VIAL. *of the beast* ; and darkness and torment
 followed.

THESE emblematical visitations of the providence of God plainly represent a loathsome and diseased condition of the whole social body, originating in a religiously morbid state of its moral, political, civil, executive, and federal constitution: disfiguring the fair face, and corrupting every member and part; vitiating its functions, and deteriorating the health of communities. From such a condition of social deterioration proceed, by natural necessity, malignant and sanguinary strifes, implacable factions, vengeful retaliations of civil injuries and religious bigotries: general wars; civil wars; ecclesiastical persecutions instituted by ascendant heresies; and terrific confusions resulting from the darkness of a malignant and injurious superstition. These indeed appear to be the general characters metaphorically expressed and intended in the *five* first vials; which I therefore conclude to represent generally the moral, civil, municipal, political, and intellectual or rather un-intellectual condition and consequent national disasters of nations professing to be the establishments of God and the followers of *the Lamb*! And seeing that men's eyes were not open to these glaring contradictions to their profession, I conclude they were abandoned, through the debasing influence of besotting error, to the utmost and baneful excesses of mental blindness and "*intellectual darkness*." These, or such as these, appear, on the very face of the *five* first vials, to be their general characters. And it is particularly observable that these social and civil evils are very similar to, or even the same as, the state of social and civil evils represented in the *four* first trumpets, as also in the *four* first seals. The vials, as I have already said, being, in fact, one more in number than either the seals or the trumpets, there is, of course, one vial more to spare than accrued to the seals and the trumpets: and thus the *five* first vials are commensurate with the *four* first seals and the *four* first trumpets.

But the *two last* vials, like the *two last* of the *fifth and sixth* seals and trumpets, are manifestly very different from the preceding judgments of their respective series : and point plainly to specific historical events, which had vast influence upon the affairs of christendom at large : and the latter of which vials (the seventh) seems likely to produce immense and protracted or permanent results upon a large portion or even on the entire of the habitable earth.

“The sixth angel pours out his vial on
SIXTH VIAL. “*the great river Euphrates: and the waters*
 “thereof are dried up, that the way of
 “the kings of the East may be prepared.”

I am aware that this vial supports, or rather is made to support, in the estimation of many, a very favourite or popular persuasion, viz., the restoration of the Jews to the land of Canaan. But independently of the consideration that God's positive and unequivocal declaration stands a bar to such an event: assuring us that the Jews, *as an accepted nation*, shall never be restored to their country and to the favour of God : for, that the land of “Judea shall be an everlasting hissing;” that “God shall bow down their backs always;” and that “they shall not come into God's inheritance :” “let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents :” “add iniquity unto their iniquity, and *let them not come into thy righteousness:*” “let them be *blotted out of the book of the living,*” and not be *written with the righteous:*”—independently, I say, of these bars to the return and divine favour of the scattered tribes,—how, let me ask, could the return of the Jews to God's favour and their country be shown to constitute one of the vials of God's wrath upon *European Western nations, the horns or members of the two Beasts*, or of nations far withdrawn from the influence and movements of the land of Canaan ? How could such things affect *Antichrist* ? Antichrist, whoever he be, must *profess* Christ: having the form of godliness, but denying the power: and since Judæa is occupied by Mahometans, and not by Christians, it is plain that, if the converted or unconverted tribes of Israel are to cross the Euphrates or

their return to Judæa, the only opponents with whom they can come in contact are Mahometans and not Christians. But indeed the nature of emblematical composition requires that "*the waters of the great river Euphrates*" should be interpreted of *nations constituting that part of Asia, or that portion of mankind amongst which Euphrates flows*. For as the sea is the natural emblem of the world at large,—so individual rivers, which flow into the sea, naturally represent individual nations which contribute their part to constitute mankind. By Euphrates, then, we must understand the nations of *Asia*, and especially that part of *Asia* which Euphrates may reasonably be supposed to represent. And by the "*drying-up*" of the waters of Euphrates I presume is meant *the obliteration of former Asiatic national establishments*: and by "*the kings of the East*" I doubt not is meant *the kingdom or empire of the Saracens or Turks*. These conquerors (the Saracens, who came largely from Idumæa, near the Euphrates, as well as from Arabia; and the Turks, who came indeed originally from the far East, and established themselves in the Eastern territories bordering on Euphrates, thence extending their dominion over the Eastern division of the Roman and Saracen empires, first in Asia and Africa, and afterwards in Europe) did mightily *plague*, harass, and terrify all christendom and the *Western* nations of the Roman empire or *the Beast*: as the history of the modern Roman empire, of its crusades and its instituted orders of knighthood abundantly testifies. About fifty years before the time of Luther and the reign of Charles the Fifth, they took Constantinople, and extinguished, under the apocalyptic character of **THE DESTROYER**, the *Eastern Roman empire*: thus fulfilling the predictions of *the sixth trumpet*, which falls within *the first grand division* of the Apocalypse, as we have seen. And now they constitute the accomplishment of *the sixth vial* of God's wrath and of *the plagues* poured out upon the *Western Roman empire or kingdom of the Beast*: which falls within the *second grand division* of the prophecy. Let it not be forgotten that the Saracens very nearly accomplished the conquest of Western Europe; and that Charles Martel, the grandfather of Charlemagne, defeated them, and delivered *Europe from the sword of the Saracens*.

Here let the student observe, that the *ancient Roman Empire* survived in its *Eastern department*, for many ages after the *Western department* had sunk and *risen again* in another form, viz., that of the empire established by Charlemagne, or of the Beast with seven heads and ten *crowned horns*. But, from the period when the ancient Roman empire had become finally and utterly divided into its two departments of *old and new Rome*, or *Rome and Constantinople*, or *Eastern and Western*—their respective and *concurrent destinies* demanded necessarily *separate and distinct prophetic histories*. And since the *trumpets* already pertained to the *ancient and still subsisting or uninterrupted Eastern department*, which was subverted by the sixth or last *trumpet*; it became necessary to contrive the *vials* for the *modern or Western restored empire*, or empire of the seven-headed Beast, whose subversion is to be the theme of the *last vial*. From the period therefore of the four first *trumpets*, i. e., from the period of the division of the empire into its two departments of *Western and Eastern* by Constantine's successors,—the fifth and sixth *trumpets*, which then remained yet to sound, were occupied *exclusively on the Eastern department*, as the seventh *trumpet* or the *vials exclusively are on the Western*. If, now, the concurrent and parallel histories of the two departments should have been deeply, though differently, affected by *one and the same historical incident*, such as the Saracenic and Turkish invasions; it is plain, this incident, common in some respects to both, but not utterly destructive to the Western,—must be twice detailed: once in the *trumpets*, and once again in the *vials*. Such indeed is the fact: and the prophet appears to have taken studious care to present such a marked parallel and coincidence of subject and terms between the *SIXTH vial* and the *SIXTH trumpet* as should identify the two narratives of the one historical incident common, though not destructive in common, to both: and thus the incidents of the *sixth vial* are parallel and synchronous, and in some respects synonomous, with the incidents of the *sixth trumpet*. The historical cause was the same: the effects were different. The sixth *trumpet*, as we have seen, “looses the four “angels which had been bound in *Euphrates*,” thereby dispatching the Turkish myriads to the subversion of the Eastern

empire. And now we have the sixth vial "drying up the waters of the very same *Euphrates*; thereby preparing the way for "the *kings or conquerors of the East*," and employing them as the instruments of one of God's *plagues* upon the *Western empire* or the *empire of the seven-headed Beast* and his colleague the *two-horned Lamb*, or (viewing the two colleagued powers as one) upon the *man of sin or Antichrist*.

The point and propriety of the term "kings of the East" can scarcely escape the reader's notice: it being singularly applicable to that power which, by *subverting* the *Eastern* empire of Rome, and fixing the seat of its government at *Constantinople*, became the object of terror, trouble, and *plague* to the *Western* empire and its consenting neighbouring nations. The Turks continued long to harass that part of christendom which lay contiguous to their new conquests. Hungary has been desolated by their arms: the very walls of Vienna have tottered at the presence of their hosts: Italy herself has trembled at their progress and vicinity: and terrified christendom has been leagued to resist the advancing power of the Turks. Such, I presume, are the contents of the *sixth vial*. As the *seventh* or *last* vial presents an inquiry of paramount interest, I shall make it the subject of a separate section.

SEC. XVI.—*Seventh Vial.—Of the unclean Spirits like FROGS.*

PREVIOUSLY to announcing the seventh or last and consummating vial of God's wrath upon the two Beasts or the political establishment of Antichrist, the prophet describes "*three unclean spirits LIKE FROGS, proceeding from the mouth of THE DRAGON, of THE BEAST*" with ten horns, "*and of THE FALSE PROPHET.*" For, these spirits were to play a conspicuous part in the political drama; inasmuch as they were "to go forth unto the kings of the earth" or of the modern Roman empire, "*AND of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of "God "Almighty.*" And he gathered them together unto a place called "*in the Hebrew tongue ARMAGEDDON.*"

Now, in order to facilitate the interpretation of this hieroglyphical representation of *the Frogs*, it is obviously necessary to ascertain the legitimate signification of each prominent term and particular figure included in the representation.

Let us but reflect on the great importance of the subject now to be discussed. This vial represents the greatest incident recorded in the apocalyptic annals, viz., the providential judgment falling on that evil political power which had been foretold, with circumstances of peculiar reprobation, by God's ancient prophets;—the prediction of whose destruction was the hope and support of the faithful during many ages of their suffering;—and its accomplishment was the consummation of divine promises to disciples, in their deliverance from satanic malice and human barbarity,—the divine or providential achievement of the temporal prosperity of the Messiah's kingdom. It is important that we should divest our minds of prejudices (a thing hard to be done): for, on a correct interpretation of this vial depends our perception or our blindness, our acquiescence or our resistance to God's providences of *the present day*.

Who, then, is "*the false prophet*?" what are "*the demons*" and "*the spirits of demons working miracles*?" in what consists "*their likeness of frogs*?" and what is the meaning of the name "*Armageddon*?" and what the signification of "*a place*" of "*a battle*?" and what of "*a battle*" between "*the kings of the earth AND of the whole world gathered together by these unclean spirits*" on the one side, and "*THE WORD OF GOD*" on the other side? These all are questions obviously requiring a consistent and satisfactory answer; on the correctness of which answer depends in this *our day*, the enjoyment of that "*blessedness*" which is the lot of "*the reader and OBSERVER of this prophecy*." Let us then be cautious "*how we hear*," and how we read, lest our prejudices blind us to the instruction conveyed in the extraordinary terms of this vial or terminal dispensation of God's providence.

A false prophet can possibly be no other than a *false teacher*; and the false prophet *must* mean (for want of all other possible meaning) *the spiritual officials of spurious Christianity*. Such false teachers and *false apostles* existed in the lifetime of the Apostles John and Paul, and were at that early day declared by John to be

that very Antichrist whose then future development was to manifest himself in the enormities which the Apostle Paul predicted in the character of the Man of sin. False Christianity was "*to heap to itself teachers having itching ears, and turning to fables.*" From among these teachers "were to arise men *perverting the truth, and drawing away disciples after them.*" "*Demons*" were well known amongst the pagans as *semi-deified defunct heroes*; and after the example of these pagan semi-deities, the degenerate christians were to institute a worship of defunct and fabulous *spiritual heroes or saints*; and in the spirit of (perhaps minor kind of) idolatry, marvellous powers and attributes were to be imputed to these spiritual defunct heroes exciting the reverence, piety, and confidence of the corrupt christian world. These marvellous powers are *the miracles or wonders* performed by the false prophet, and appropriated by him to the support and elevation of his egregious pretensions: and on the strength of this confidence of traditionary authority, the false teachers were to establish their spiritual rule over a deceived world; upon which world "was to be sent strong delusion, that they should believe these lies:" for indeed HIGH AUTHORITY MUST NEEDS BE FURNISHED FOR JUSTIFYING THE DEPARTURES OF CHRISTIANS FROM APOSTOLIC INSTITUTIONS, AND FOR THE CHANGES INTRODUCED INTO THE VARIOUS CHURCHES, AND SUBSTITUTED FOR THE ORDINANCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVEYED THROUGH ITS SPECIFIED ORGANS—THE APOSTLES,—SPECIFIED, I say, ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST. Nothing whatever could possibly have answered this purpose but the "*the traditions of men,*" the asserted authority of asserted saints, or of asserted ancient authorities making void the written or apostolic word. How effectually and wonderfully this change has been wrought, may be understood by any one who considers the great difference between the constitution of the primitive churches as they are represented in *all* the apostolic writings, and the constitution of the church as represented and established by Roman catholic and Protestant catholic tradition. Of the *actual process* of this change from *apostolic* to *catholic regimen* (whether Roman or Protestant) we have not the

faintest report in all the writings of the so-called fathers. But there stands before our eyes, in the written records of the true Apostles, an undeniable evidence, viz., the most palpable difference of apostolic institutions from catholic. Nor is the apostolic history of *primitive* days silent on the particular subject of inquiry—"how this change was wrought." It was wrought by the false teachers, the popular preachers, the false apostles of apostolic days, who "acknowledged not the true apostles; but *separated themselves and the majority of professors*," and established their heresies in opposition to the dwindling authority of the apostles of the Lord, as was formerly stated in the section upon *Antichrist*. The *likeness* of this order of men—the false prophets or teachers—to *frogs*, is to be sought (I presume) in some *typical analogy* between the *physical* qualities of the *amphibious* reptiles,—and the *spiritual* attributes, functions, and habits, and *civil* authority and privileges of this *ambiguous* order of men, thus partaking of an amphibious life or of a *spiritual* and *temporal* or *civil* existence. The plagues of Egypt will furnish us with the particulars of the analogy: for, the figures of the New Testament can reasonably be sought only in the types furnished in the Old Testament: and the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage is the scriptural type of the deliverance of Christ's church from the civil persecution and oppression of Antichrist. The frogs, then, of Egypt, were a great nuisance in the palace of the king, as well as in the cottages of the poor. They came up out of the river that flowed with fertility to the realm of Egypt, whose healthful waters were corrupted and made to generate these unclean animals: and they invaded their very "bed-chambers, fields, ovens, and kneading-troughs." What, now, is the only possible likeness or analogy of this type? It is not to be discovered in the ecclesiastical institution of an establishment generated primitively in the foulness and corruptions wherewith error has defiled the river of God's truth; giving birth to an order of creatures metamorphosed into *amphibious* reptiles from the spawn generated in stagnant waters; or as the apocalyptic allegory represents them, an *ambiguous* order of men, whose double character of spiritual pretension and civil privilege gives them admission to the chambers or private sen-

timents and secrets of all families,—to the corn fields of the rich possessors of the soil,—and to the ovens and kneading-troughs of the humble occupant: the royal palace having no more security than the thatched cottage from their stealthy and unnatural intrusion? The apocalyptic frogs were “*spirits of demons* :” that is, I presume, their *doctrines* were the superstition, and their *institution* was based on the *traditionary* authority of ancient reputed spiritual worthies revered after the model of the pagan-demons or deified heroes, and reputed benefactors of mankind in remote ages; being a preposterous magnification of the fabulous and real personages of reputed saints famous in the legend of ecclesiastical story. Thus were these unclean *spirits* to found their spiritual pretensions to holiness or sacredness of character on the traditionary sanction of apostles, storied saints and fictitious and real martyrs. They were to work *miracles*: that is, “with all deceivableness of unrighteousness” they were to *arrogate divine authority* over men’s consciences, deluding them with “lying wonders,” or impudent assertions of *marvellous pretensions* falsely founded on the authority of abused and perverted scriptures. They were “*unclean spirits*.” This of course signifies that their spiritual pretensions to a holy or sacred character were not sanctioned by *the Word of God*. John, in his epistle, says—“Believe not every spirit: but *try* the spirits, whether they be of God.” In this passage the Apostle plainly means that *the teachers* were to be *tried* by the test of conformability or non-conformability with the principles of the Gospel, and with *the records, precepts, and precedents* of the pure and written word of God. *How else* could they possibly be *tested*? That they were *unclean* in that particular sense which refers to their impure *origin* and utter want of divine or *scriptural* authority is further intimated by their issuing from *the mouth of the dragon* (the old spirit of paganism) and *the Beast*, and of *the false prophet*. The mouth being a very obvious emblem of *the source* of doctrine; and the institution of *their order* being an invention of *the false prophets or teachers of spurious Christianity*, suggested by *Satan or Paganism*, and confirmed or sanctioned by the authority of *the Beast or civil power of modern Western empire*,—they are appropriately *said to issue from the mouth of the three*. Highly calculated must

they be, by their pious pretensions, to impose on the minds of the unwary; because a blessedness is pronounced upon him whose vigilance should protect him from the contagion of their doctrine and principles: so deceptive were these self-interested workers, who "transformed themselves into *Apostles* of Christ." Another sense in which these spirits were to merit the epithet "*unclean*" is to be learnt from those scriptures which tell us that the teachers of the antichristian world were to manifest their selfishness by propagating doctrines subservient to their own pecuniary emolument "*for filthy lucre's sake.*" Daniel, speaking of a peculiar character of the antichristian tyranny, says—"He shall divide the land for gain:" thus foretelling even at that distant day, that the monstrous hypocrisy of Antichrist should succeed in a scheme of partitioning the landed world for the maintenance of the various ranks of his spiritual officials, who thus "made such gross merchandize of their hearers by *feigned words*" or barefaced and hypocritical pretensions. Jude, in his epistle written obviously and *avowedly* for the express purpose of guarding disciples against the errors of Antichrist by marking his characters, declares, that "*mockers were to come,*" i. e., men who were to make a *mock profession* of Christ: and that by abusing the grace of God to purposes of personal emolument, and "*turning it into a system of cupidity or covetousness* (lasciviousness) they would thereby virtually DENT THE ONLY LORD GOD and OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST; (the same prediction as that of John, who says that "he is Antichrist who *denies* or *believes* his profession of THE FATHER AND THE SON"). And he denounces woe upon certain "*filthy dreamers*" (false prophets or teachers for filthy lucre's sake) on account of three specific evils, which breathed in their doctrines and marked their character. "Woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of CAIN, and ran greedily after the error of BALAAM, for lucre, and perished in the gainsaying of CORE." Now, Cain hated and slew his brother, and thus became the first persecutor of the righteous, or the prototype of religious oppression. Balaam loved the wages of unrighteousness: and Core revolted against the divine authority of Moses and Aaron. Hatred, therefore, of the advocates of truth,—the love of lucre,—and "gainsaying" or insubjection

to the holy spirit or the divine authority of the Apostles,—were to inspire and characterize the lessons and practice of these teachers of the antichristian world. And prompted and led on by these “unclean spirits” or teachers of oppression, rapacity, and rebellion against apostolic authority, the hosts of reigning Antichrist are yet to be gathered together to the battle of *Armageddon*, or the final issue of their long *political* conflict with “THE WORD OF GOD” described in the 19th chapter and *immediately* introductory of the Millennium.

In translating the word “Armageddon,” the reader will agree with me that a kind of analogy must here also guide us to its true meaning. The name of “*a place*” where a figurative *battle* is fought, must be intended to express *the nature or occasion* of some *contest* : and the etymology of the word must direct us to the signification of that occasion and contest. On a former occasion, finding that the Greek word “Apollyon” and the Hebrew word “Abaddon” signify “Destroyer,” we were thus directed to the Mahometans, the Saracens and Turks, “the destroyers” of the Eastern Roman empire. And now, in the Hebrew word “Armageddon,” we learn by its etymology * that it signifies “THE UNCOVERING OF SPOILS.” Let those who know Hebrew, which I am utterly ignorant of, correct me if I am mistaken, or if I have brought out this meaning by any violence of etymology, or any subtleness of interpretation. I suppose the word is here used in reference to the 17th and 18th verses of the nineteenth chapter ; where the fowls of *heaven* are emblematically invited to glut themselves upon the figurative slaughter of the field of the great battle and *spiritual* victory of “*the word of God*.” That is, the anti-christian proprietors of ecclesiastical revenues will be spoiled by the ravenous observants of the spiritual and civil contest (the secular persons who will greedily appropriate those revenues) of the spoils which the religious orders had *long before* appropriated from the whore of Babylon ; and which she had purloined from the dupes of her craft.† History has already presented us with a specimen of this

* “Ar” in Hebrew signifies “to uncover,” and “megiddo” signifies “spoils.”

† See Rev. xvii. 16.

“*spoliage*,” in the application made by the government and nobles of the monastic revenues at the period of the dissolution of the monasteries. And presuming that what has been, will be,—we may guess *the kind* of fate that awaits all the revenues of the false teachers of political Christianity. And when I read that the field of “the uncovering of spoils” is the name of *the place* where a great battle is fought, I understand that *the place* represents *the occasion* of a great and final conflict, or civil contest : and that one principle motive which God in his providence will inspire into the mind of christendom, thereby urging mankind finally and effectually to rid themselves of the spiritual oppression (in this happy country rather *an incumbrance*, indeed, than an oppression) will be a general and increasing disgust at the mercenary, unfounded, and injurious pretensions of their spiritual teachers ; and prompting them to reduce and appropriate the revenues of the establishment. Which increasing disgust will no doubt be lamented and branded by the interested and declining party, as an evidence of the increasing infidelity of the age, the great bugbear of modern piety. I have only to add, upon the subject of the frogs, that their number, “three,” seems to have some reference to spiritual mystery, and to the three sources of their origin and sanction : and that these spirits are appropriately introduced on this occasion, which is the eve of the outpouring of the seventh or last vial, wherein *they* are to gather together the kings of *the earth* (the Western Roman empire) AND OF THE WHOLE WORLD* to a great battle or civil contest upon spiritual affairs, wherein they (the frogs or false teachers) are the party chiefly, and (one would think) only, concerned. For, surely the national churches, though deprived of their national wealth, might still, as one of many christian sects, maintain their spiritual existence ; and not the worse probably for being deprived of the enormous wealth accruing to their prelates, to the great disparagement of the inferior labourers in the clerical service. My belief is, that the Church of England would greatly flourish by the change. †

* This distinction between *the earth* and *the whole world* shows that “*the earth*” specifies some peculiar large portion of *the political world*.

† The contemplation of the subject now before us is, in fact, the question of *the union of Church and State*. That this union was, at its commence-

Previously to detailing the transactions of this seventh vial, it seems necessary to ascertain with exact precision *who* the false prophet is ; of whom, by *this* name at least (now, for the first time, abruptly introduced, ch. 16: 13) we have not hitherto read in the text of the Apocalypse ; though I myself have frequently alluded to the figurative personage.

ment under Constantine and his immediate successors, most injurious to mankind, and even to Christianity, no one will dispute. It was injurious to Christianity, because it was disgraceful to humanity. Still less will it be disputed that it was most injurious during many succeeding ages and centuries. That at this very day it is generally and almost universally injurious in Roman Catholic countries, few, I presume, in England will deny. Yet this union in *England* is thought, by the members of the national church establishment, to be that happy institution which is free from the objections admitted to be valid and common to all former national church establishments. But so thought they *all* in their day : and so *now* think the Romanists with respect to their own establishments, regretting only that the ancient power of their church is lessened, and that heresies are thereby tolerated in the various kingdoms of Western Europe. What is there, then, in the church establishment of these realms that confers on it the praise of excellence ? The Dissenters, a very numerous portion and scarcely a minority of the nation, do not think so. And this is an important consideration, when we reflect that *Dissenters* are, for the most part, more serious in their religious sentiments than the multitude of the *national* establishment. Perhaps the most feasible objection to the dissolution of the union of Church and State in this country may be urged in the question—What is to become of the religion and morals of the lower orders, and especially of the lowest, and very numerous, and destitute class, if no provision is made by the state for their instruction in religion, and for their incitement to moral principles ? To this reasonable objection it may be replied, that an amelioration of the condition of these destitute numbers is scarcely to be expected (if we may judge by the past) from the future zeal of the church establishment :—that the *voluntary* system appears, in spite even of the damper of a national provision, to be capable of doing more for this neglected class of men, than does the national church establishment : and if the damper were withdrawn, there is every reason to believe that the *voluntary* exertions of the nation would be far more energetic than they have ever yet been ; for, the clergy and laity of the establishment do not relish co-operation with Dissenters. Christianity itself, and all the modern zeal of those who have contributed to its great extension, are beholden to the *voluntary* efforts of men. In the example of the United States of America we have a precedent capable of satisfying us that a people scarcely less given to religious efforts than the people of this country, are not behind the rest of the world in respect of the things both of religion and of morals. But would a dissolution of Church and State in these realms necessarily preclude a national provision for the religious and moral instruction of the lowest classes, which appear to have been left by our church establishment destitute of all religious and moral instruction ? What should hinder the state, even if its union with the church were dissolved, from providing these destitute poor with all the comforts and appliances both of moral instruction and of the religious and ceremonial or reputed ordinances of Christianity ? Might not public edifices, less classical and expensive in their architecture, be provided ;

The Pope, of course, is the Protestant's scape-goat ; whose head exactly fits this and every odium which the commentators of the Revelation can find no one else to rest it on. But indeed there is internal and conclusive evidence in the book, that the papal power is not here intended. For we find that this *false prophet* does not come to his political end till just before

where, at different hours of Sundays and other days, the various tastes of the lower orders might be consulted by the zealous efforts of the various sects? Might not biblical lessons be read? might not prayer be free to many or all sects, suitable to the various prejudices of the lower orders, and available by the superior zeal of the teachers of any and all sects and persuasions? Can the clergy or the lay members of our national church establishment be supposed to be so bigoted as to be jealous or fearful of the success of sectarian zeal amongst the ranks of the uninstructed? Might not paid officials, of all religious denominations, be appointed by the state for this simple accommodation of the wretched and destitute multitudes who are now never known to attend the public ordinances of the national church establishment? Surely, and without a shadow of doubt, this neglected and numerous class would then be better accommodated than they now are: and if once the habit of attendance were obtained from them, improvement in that attendance, i. e., in religious and moral instruction and principles, would certainly proceed, to the great advantage of the state. The Bible is of that nature, that the bare reading of the scriptures is perhaps the most potent of all possible moral lessons: indeed its simple text is commonly weakened by commentary, at least with respect to its *moral* influence. My persuasion is, that under such a regimen, efforts would be made to induce and to seduce the neglected poor to attendance; which efforts would vastly exceed all the benefits that could ever be hoped for from the labours of the established clergy, even with the help and zealous assistance of their male and female communicants. When speaking thus freely of so tender a subject as *the dissolution of the union of Church and State*, I am not such an enthusiast as to conclude that we even approach the period of such a crisis. That the day is to come when the *civil* domination of any single sect will terminate, I verily believe. I believe the arrival of that period to be the arrival of the Millennium; conjoined, as I presume it will be, with a return of some or even of many to apostolic obedience or the adoption of the precepts and institutions recorded in the writings of the Apostles. WHY WERE THESE INSTITUTIONS THUS RECORDED? and why was a glimpse, as it were, given to us of the nature of CHRIST'S KINGDOM UNDER THE REGIMEN OF THE APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY, OR OF THE ORAL AND WRITTEN WORD OF THE APOSTLES? Why were the heresies of that really PRIMITIVE day, or the departures of the churches from the apostolic institutions, so lamented and condemned by the apostolic organs of the holy spirit? Was not the record written with the manifest design that IN THE FULNESS OF GOD'S TIME HIS PURPOSES MIGHT BE ACCOMPLISHED IN THE RETURN OF CHRIST'S DISCIPLES TO THE APOSTOLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIS SPIRITUAL KINGDOM? I presume not even to guess when the period may arrive. It may be hundreds of years hence: it may be much sooner. But, come it will; for the operations of Providence, I believe, are already at work, and have been irrevocably announced in the outpouring of the seventh or last vial of wrath.

the Millennium ; when his destruction (his *political* destruction, of course) is recorded together with that of the beast with ten crowned horns, in chapter 19 : 20 ; where both are cast *alive* into the lake of fire and brimstone (God's providential destruction and wrath) : whereas *the spiritual monarchy of Babylon* (which city of imperial notoriety represents *the papal power*, or rather *the Romish Church*) is overthrown in the *preceding* or 18th chapter : and in the 11th verse of the same chapter, "the smoke of her burning" is seen and bewailed. The truth is, that "the false prophet" or teacher, is *originally and really* no other than what his name implies—viz., *the teachers or spiritual officials* of spurious Christianity : who (as the Apostle Paul forewarns the Elders or Bishops of the Church of Ephesus) in progress of development from the days of the Apostles to the period of adulthood of the mystery of iniquity, became *eventually the lamblike beast with two horns* ; horns being indisputably the emblem of *political* power. And the lamblike beast is merely the *apocalyptic* representation of the Apostle Paul's "man of sin," and of the Apostle John's and Jude's "reigning Antichrist" or the various *political* establishments of mock or spurious Christianity. A false prophet is obviously and merely a false teacher, i. e., one who teaches falsehood under the profession of truth. And accordingly we read that such false teachers or antichrists existed even in the days of the Apostles ; having, in some instances, left ("gone out from") the communion of the Apostles and their disciples : and in other instances having renounced the Apostles, and excommunicated those disciples who adhered to the Apostles (3 Epist. John 9 : 10—see also Paul's mournful complaint that *all the churches of Asia had renounced him* : 2 Tim. 1 : 15), Such false teachers are defined by John to be those professors who, virtually, though not verbally "*denying*" the Christ whom they professed, disregarded Christ's *apostolic* authority in the government of his kingdom. But in short process of time the primitive churches of Christ universally "*turned from the truth to fables*:" and being unable to endure sound doctrine, "they stocked themselves with teachers *having itching ears*." These so applied themselves to their credulous audience, *the world of corrupt Christianity*, that they obtained vast spiri-

tual influence over men's minds : and having at length quite superseded Paganism, they established ecclesiastical authority in all the states of christendom ; exalting themselves so as to control, overawe, and finally subject, the civil powers. And this Antichrist, the renegade disciple of Christ, or apostate from apostolic truth and rule, increased in stature and in favour with men : till at length his mitred head out-topped the crown of kings ; and LONG BEFORE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF POPERY, THE REIGN OF ANTICHRIST was established, or "that man of sin was developed : " who, progressing still to the sublimest point of spiritual usurpation, at length established *Popery*, which "exalted itself above all that is called "God," that is, above *the supreme magistrate ordained by God in civil society*. This progress to political supremacy had, in all its steps, been made "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness and lying wonders." These lying wonders or audacious pretensions are "the miracles wrought by the false prophet" or by the ecclesiastical establishment of false teachers ; and are especially noted in the 20th verse of the 19th chapter, which records the destruction of *the false prophet*,—NOT IN HIS CAPACITY OF FALSE CHRISTIANITY,—but in his *political* capacity of THE LAMBLIKE BEAST, *together with the beast with ten crowned horns*, LONG AFTER the destruction of Babylon or the *Romish church* with its *papal monarch* ; whose destruction or *political* depression is recorded in the PRECEDING or 18th chapter. Be it observed ; the beast with ten crowned horns is not at all an *ecclesiastical or spiritual* power ; but is simply the *civil* power of the nations becoming *subservient indeed to the ecclesiastical purposes and spiritual pretensions of THE FALSE PROPHET* who had now become THE LAMBLIKE BEAST, or mock and tyrannizing Christianity. But when the ecclesiastical establishment of false Christianity had thus obtained an undue superiority or political influence over the civil powers of the various nations of the *Western Roman world*, after its desolation by the barbarians ; in other words, when the lamblike beast with two horns had again risen up out of *the earth* or new Roman empire, *soon after* the rising up again of the beast with *ten horns* out of *the sea* or the political commotions of the world in which *the old Western empire* had sunk ; then, and not till then, did

the lamblike beast, or the ecclesiastical establishments of Western Europe “*make AN IMAGE of the beast with TEN horns : that is, it then instituted the spiritual empire of the Pope, who bore a spiritual resemblance or analogy to the civil emperor ; which civil emperor, in the person of Charlemagne, “revived the empire of the Cæsars under the title of Roman Emperor of the West or of the holy Roman or German empire :”* and which modern Roman empire is perpetuated to this very day in the persons of the German emperors. At this very moment (1850) the Emperor of Germany is engaged in supporting the Pope at Rome by force of arms, against the popular will of the Roman and Italian laity ; and was prevented from leading his army to Rome solely by the French who anticipated him. Thus the purely spiritual authority of the false prophet, or the teachers of false Christianity, having *first* advanced to political or civil power, erected *afterwards* the spiritual or rather ecclesiastical *empire* of the papacy or monarchy of spiritual despotism and cruel tyranny ; employing the civil empire in the execution of its spiritual oppression, upon all the nations within its sphere. It is plain, then, that this papal monarchy or *spiritual image* of the civil empire, was not at all essential to the *the existence of the lamblike beast* : for the image or the papacy was a mere device or creation made *by* the lamblike beast or political Antichrist, whose career *as the false prophet or teacher* had commenced even in the days of the Apostle John. And therefore, as the lamblike beast *made* the image, so might he, or the *civil* powers whenever they re-acquired their legitimate freedom, unmake or destroy it ; as we find they actually did. For, “the ten horns began to hate the whore,” (the whore of Babylon, the mother of harlots) “and to *strip* her naked, and “eat her flesh, and burn her with fire ;” that is, to strip her of her spoils, appropriate her revenues, and bitterly persecute her (chap. 17 : 16). The great whore—“the mother of whores”—(that is, the prostitute parent of many and various prostitute and persecuting establishments) was indeed the Romish church : and the beast which she sat on, and which supported and was directed by her, was the beast with ten crowned horns or the *associated kingdoms* of the Western Roman empire. But many

of these kingdoms grew tired of Romish enormities; as probably they all will sooner or later: and renouncing the Romish persuasion with a vehemence of hatred corresponding to their sense of the discovered imposture which had so long enslaved them, they established various forms of ecclesiastical government, all agreeing in their hatred of old mother, and in their bitter retaliation and persecution of their former oppressor. "For God, when formerly he united them, had put it into their hearts to fulfil his providential will, and to agree, and to give their kingdoms to the beast (with ten horns) MERELY "UNTIL the words of God" (the prophecies of scripture) "should be fulfilled" in the establishment of Antichrist's fabrication of the image or popedom: and THEN they were to cease to agree, i. e., they were to separate from Rome's communion and from the political association of the kingdoms of the German or holy Roman empire; "and into the cup which Rome had filled to them, they were to fill to her double." Hence it is evident that the subversion of Romish power by the Protestant nations was merely the providential suppression of one (the most enormous and preposterous, I grant) of the many political modifications of Antichrist or "the false prophet." But the destruction of the papacy or image made by the lamblike beast,—and the persecution of the great whore,—and the burning of the great city of Babylon,—by no means imply the destruction of THE LAMBLIKE BEAST OR THE FALSE PROPHET'S political power, or tyrannizing and oppressing Antichrist. Accordingly we find when we do really come to the final termination or destruction of the political power of Antichrist immediately before the Millennium—chap. 19: 20—for the spiritual error of Antichrist or false profession, having ever existed even in the presence of the Apostles, will surely never cease to exist), that no mention whatever is then made either of the image (popery) or of the great whore (the Church of Rome); both which had already been politically destroyed, i. e., paralyzed by the loss of state support and civil power. For, the image or papal office or spiritual emperor had long previously dwindled into political insignificance: and the whore or Romish church, had herself, long previously (chap. 18: 2, 3, 4, &c.) become the object of hatred and persecution. There-

fore *the only*, or at least the chief political powers, which, at the day of God's consummating his wrath on persecuting, i. e., on *political* Antichrist, remain in a condition to advance to battle against *the word of God*, or to conspire against his purposes of establishing the Messiah's kingdom in the *civil* tranquility and *spiritual* freedom of his people,—are "*the beast with ten horns*" (or the independent kingdoms of the Western empire, whether popish or Protestant) and "*the false prophet who wrought miracles*" (or the spurious religious establishments of the various christian nations, which pretend to found their authority on the word of God). These both are cast *alive* into the lake of fire: that is, they are then *politically*, though not *spiritually*, destroyed; their *spiritual* authority being no longer supported by *the state*. For,

By "the beast and the false prophet being cast *alive* into the lake of fire," I presume we are to understand, not that false Christianity, with its crops of false teachers, whether in the form of popery or Protestantism, will at all cease to *exist*, nor even largely and indefinitely to extend itself:—but that *the favouring of its power by the state, or its ability to oppress and persecute*, will be utterly withdrawn: and that its *political existence* will thus be destroyed. "The false prophet," therefore, *in his simple and original capacity of false profession and clerical pretension, or deviation from apostolic rule and principle*, may live, and of course, *will live*, to the end of time: but *in his capacity of the man of sin, which is the reign of Antichrist*, he will perish for ever, together with the beast having seven heads and ten horns, or the *political system supporting the obnoxious pretender*;—to make way for the peaceful but inostensible reign of Christ, *in an intellectual condition of civil society at large, and in the consequent security, freedom, and peace of ALL religious moral denominations, and, AMONGST THESE, of the spiritual association of Christ's true, though perhaps comparatively few, disciples*. To execute *all* these protracted providences,

The *seventh* angel pours out this
SEVENTH VIAL. the last vial into THE AIR: and a
 voice pronounces, "*It is done.*"

This expression—"it is done"—alludes to the consolatory

assurance, now to be fulfilled, but formerly confirmed by a divine oath, and set forth in the narrative of the seven thunders of the little book, in the tenth chapter, by an angel who is there represented as standing upon *the sea* and upon *the earth*; that is, by an agent of him who controls all the political commotions of the world at large, and all the civil establishments of the nations. In that assurance the sovereign of the world pledged his truth to his suffering servants, that “in the days when the seventh angel should sound,” their sufferings should terminate, or “the mystery of God be finished; or rather, that the providences of God accomplishing these effects should then begin to operate, however long might be the period of their operation. Now, the seventh trumpet being septipartite or divided into the seven vials,—of course the seventh or last vial is the fulfilment of that assurance, and is the consummation or “finishing” of Gods predicted judgments on the opponents of the peaceful establishment of Christ’s kingdom. And therefore the pouring out of the seventh vial is accompanied with the annunciation, “it is done.” The “voices, thunders, and lightnings” which ensued, represent, of course, a very indefinite period, as well as indefinite kind of visitation: save only that such emblems sufficiently denote great convulsions of the elements of political and civil society, such as *discontents and insurrections* (“voices”),—*wars, civil and foreign* (“thunders”),—and *executive severities and tyrannies* (“lightnings”):—as “the earthquake,” in which these elementary phenomena terminate, obviously denotes the subversion of the obnoxious power or of the religious and political system of tyranny and persecution, wherein society had been established. We may, however, gain sufficient information with respect both to the indefiniteness of the period and also of the kind of occurrences intended, from the circumstance of this vial being poured out into “the air.” The preceding six vials had been poured out on *the earth*,—*the sea*,—*the rivers and fountains*,—*the sun*,—*the seat of the beast*,—and *the Euphrates*: each of which elements has its appropriate figurative signification; and all of them meaning respectively, as I have already stated, the various social interests, or the *civil—political—moral—executive—and imperial or German or holy Roman* departments of the nation

concerned, and the general conditions of their people; the Euphrates designating particularly *the Asiatic region of the world* or *the Saracens and Turks*, the plagues of the Western powers. Now, the seventh or *last* vial is poured out into *the air*: and the exceeding interest of this the consummating judgment of God's providence, operating in this our age, and on this our portion of Europe; and the great importance of our forming a right conception of *the nature* of this judgment;—induce me to urge the reader's particular attention to a few observations which I will address to this particular emblem—“*the air*.”

The nature of a perfect and consistent allegory or strictly figurative composition suggests to us the propriety, and consequently the existence, of a certain consistency and mutual relation and conformity amongst the various emblems or figures employed as the language of the Apocalypse. A conviction that such a conformity must, and therefore does actually subsist amongst the figures employed throughout the whole book, will enable the student, when he has satisfactorily determined some of them to derive the interpretation of the rest. It is thus we may clearly deduce the real thing represented by *the air*. The reader, I presume, has long since acquiesced in the statement that *the sun* and *the stars* allegorically designate *kings, princes, nobles, and dignitaries*, or the highest persons in political and civil society: and consequently, that “*heaven*” or “*the heavens*,” the highest part of the firmament, wherein the heavenly bodies move or are stationed, allegorically represent *the sphere of government* or *the most elevated station or sphere* of civil and political society. Now, as “*the heavens*” or higher part of the firmament means *the highest ranks* or department of civil society, we come to the natural and necessary conclusion that the requisite consistency of allegory determines *the air*, or the lower parts of the political firmament, to *the mass of society at large*, or *the people*, or *the lower departments or general ranks*. These general positions being conceded, I proceed to say, that “*voices, thunderings, and lightnings*,” and finally “*the unprecedented earthquake*,” that followed the outpouring of the seventh vial into *the air*, represent *those commotions of the political and civil elements of society, which, disturbing the various ranks and classes of mankind from the highest*

to the lowest departments, at length terminate in a SUBVERSION of the ancient civil and ecclesiastical politics established in the Western kingdoms of Europe, and indeed of "THE WHOLE WORLD."

The student of European history may remark that the progress of civil society in our portion of Europe, unlike that of society in the northern portion of Europe, and especially in Asia and Africa, has for some centuries been tending to transfer civil importance, power, and influence, from the *fewer* to the *many*. There was a day in the history of Europe, or of that portion of it which constitutes the modern Roman empire—when civil power subsisted solely in monarchs and their nobles, or (as these last may really be called) petty kings. As we proceed in the pages of our history, we find the absoluteness of monarchs and their nobles to have declined; and a civil and political influence to have grown up amongst a class of men inferior and next to the nobles. Such have been the aristocracy of the last four hundred years. Inferior still to these, and next to them, have advanced and slowly grown up into civil importance, a class of men most numerous and comprehensive, viz., the various tribes of merchandize, agriculture, and trade. These are the bulk of mankind: they embrace wealth, intelligence, morals, and power. They stand connected with the highest and with the humblest in society: and their rank almost includes and is insensibly lost amongst the operating mechanics and peasantry on the one side, and the aristocracy or nobility and gentry on the other; nor can we guess what amount of intelligence this extensive class may eventually attain to. They are indeed the mass: and nations may at this moment be seen, amongst whom can be recognised no other *civil* grade. The States of America exemplify my position: and there are not wanting indications of a capacity of, and even a tendency to, the same civil state even in European, as perhaps also in all human society. And this tendency of society, if rightly and favourably directed, and not jealously suppressed and malevolently balked and diverted, seems to be synonymous with *progression* or the march of the human mind in the direction of social advancement. Undisciplined or infant society seems *naturally and necessarily* to resort to a paternal government, or

to monarchy conjoined with oligarchy: but a general attainment of moral and intellectual advancement as naturally and necessarily asserts the common advantages and privileges of humanity, i. e., of democracy. Commonly, however, the qualifications of a nation for self-government or democracy are prematurely anticipated: its nonage is tedious, and adulthood does not confer maturity. America was indeed precipitated upon democracy by the peculiar circumstances of her separation from the mother country: and therefore her democratic system is susceptible of much improvement. For, democracy may be said to be *a science*, which long experience alone can perfect: and education is too commonly considered to be *an accomplishment* rather than *the experience of moral discipline and true philosophy*. Moreover, democracy has too commonly overlooked the natural influence of superior personal advantages. This last-risen class, by their numbers, are effective: by their progress in civility and their attainments of information they are influential and, in many individual instances, qualified; as qualified, at least, as most of their civil superiors. By their community of interests and sentiment they are united, powerful, *irresistible*. The errors, and especially the corruptions of their predecessors in civil importance, are fully revealed to them. Comprehensive as they are, of the most numerous as well as the most populous grades of society, their power awes by its comprehensiveness; and the interests of each, inasmuch as they are mutually dependent, are the interests of all. Their *weight*, moreover, in civil affairs being greatly proportioned to their *bulk*, the necessities of the many (unlike the condition of society in former days) must imperiously dictate and even engross the solicitude of the state: just as the heavy and iron head of an arrow precedes the feathered shaft, which serves merely to preserve the missile from deviation, and cannot possibly impel, though it may possibly impede and probably divert it. Their political and civil sentiments are accordingly dictated and restrained by their *common* and universal wants: and the expression of these sentiments is the imperious and awful voice of *the people*: which to resist is to resist *the voice of God*. Vox populi vox dei: for, the intentions of providence are to be gathered from this indication. Finally, the impossibility of reduc-

ing such a host of unenslaved men to uniformity of religious persuasion and conformity of practice, must necessarily bring into disrepute all politico-religious rule and all attempts to establish any one single form of worship.

I presume that the nature of the apocalyptic allegory requires "*the air*" to be interpreted as designating *this the mass of mankind*. And the pouring out of the seventh or last vial into the air, means, I conclude, *the providential operations of God seen in his influencing this comprehensive class of society in its opposition to the civil and religious policy of their selfish, corrupt, dictatorial, and tyrannizing superiors ; and dictating or infusing their free sentiments with respect to the religious, civil, and political necessities of the Western nations of Europe.*

Let us, then, contemplate those operations of God's providence, which *subsequently to the pouring out of the sixth vial on Euphrates, or next after the Turkish conquest of Constantinople in the year 1453, have affected the destinies of Europe and the religious policy and affairs of Christendom*. Be it observed, then, that the events attendant and consequent upon the outpouring of the seventh or last vial of God's wrath *in the air*, are "*voices, thunderings, and lightnings,*" the preludes of a mighty and UNPRECEDENTED earthquake. Voices, thunderings, and lightnings are commotions and clamours of people, followed by fulminations of the ruling powers, and terrific severities of intolerant executive governments, and by consequent disaffection of the oppressed, and by retaliation of successful recusants. They are figures obviously expressive of divine judgments acting on the elements of our civil and political atmospheres ; and terminating in, and affecting, *some great revolution and mighty overthrow*, clearly expressed by the figure of a mighty and unprecedented earthquake, attended with "*great hail,*" i. e., with great and acrimonious dissention and detriment to society. The seventh vial, then, comprehends the various historical catastrophes, which, *subsequently to the sixth and preceding vial or the Turkish terrors consequent upon their conquest of Constantinople in the year 1453, led or leads to the subversion of that complicated temporal and spiritual or civil and ecclesiastical power which constitutes the various characters and forms of the man of sin or tyrannizing Antichrist, apocalyptically*

represented by *Babylon the great city and the mother of harlots, i. e., the spiritual tyranny of Rome* :—by the *Beast with ten crowned horns, i. e., the associated but independent civil establishments of the modern Roman empire* ;—and by the *Lamblike Beast with two horns, i. e., the ecclesiastical tyranny of the clergy or so-called church, under any and all of its forms, varieties, or denominations, whether exhibited in the person of the harlot mother herself, or in the persons of her harlot daughters, who, as horns of the seven headed Beast, i. e., as component and individual kingdoms of modern Western Europe, “began to hate the whore,” their spiritual parent, and to persecute her and appropriate her revenues, or “to strip her naked, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.”* The first and immediate effect of the *seventh vial* was the *division of Rome’s catholicity* : such was the *first shock of the great earthquake*, whereby “the great city of the holy Roman or German empire was” *divided into three parts, “and the cities or nations of the empire fell,”* that is, some of the nations fell from their allegiance to the empire and from the communion of the church of Rome; emancipating themselves from her spiritual thralldom. The number “three” characterizing this political and spiritual defection, is here obviously the emblem of *division*. “The cities of the nations fell” (revolted; “and great Babylon came into remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath : and there fell upon men GREAT HAIL out of HEAVEN;” that is, the Protestant reformation at the time of Luther and other reformers was attended with great social or civil asperities, and especially with cruel hostilities practised against the reforming nations by the imperialist and papal powers. The subsequent spoliation and persecutions which befel the Romanists themselves are recorded in the succeeding or 17th and 18th chapters. And it is observable that this revolution of Romanism, which is now detailed in the *sixteenth* chapter as the substance of the seventh or last *vial*, is but a repetition of what had been announced in the *eleventh* chapter when the seventh *trumpet* is sounded : the seventh trumpet being synonymous with the seven vials.

Such, I say, was the effect of “the great earthquake” recorded in *chapter 16* : 18. But the utter subversion of the modern

Roman political fabric, and of the ecclesiastical tyrannizing Christianity, whether Romish or Protestant, is not detailed till we come, to the 19th chapter or the battle of Armageddon, fought between "the word of God and his armies" on the one side,—and the Beast and the kings of THE EARTH and their armies," instigated by the unclean spirits or "false prophet," on the other side. In this battle "the Beast and the false prophet are taken and cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone;" that is, the wrathful providence of God destroys their political existence and monopoly of civil privilege. I understand the vials to be the visitations of God's providential judgments effecting those political and religious changes in the sentiments of men, whereby the Roman catholic tyranny was first broken down; and whereby subsequently the reasonable privileges and indefeasible rights of men have been or will be clearly defined, fully recognised, and securely established. The freedom of religious persuasion, its deliverance from civil persecution, its exemption from penalty and civil disqualification, and its absolute equality of civil privilege, will yet, I conceive, be conceded to all harmless religious denominations of men: and thus will the servants of God, the disciples of Jesus Christ, be made to participate in the universal exemption and benefit. And thus will the kingdom of Christ, though "not of this world" i. e., though distinct from, and unconnected with civil and political institutions,—be, for the first time since its annunciation in "the days of John the Baptist," established and very, very long established, in peace: in other words, the Millennium, or an indefinitely long period of religious peace and secular or governmental impartiality and protection will have arrived. Satan or the enemy of Christ's kingdom will have been "bound."

Time, it is true, which changes all things, and crumbles the stones of the field, has broken the flinty rocks of European and christian tyranny, and has extorted reluctant, but partial concession from the rigid gripe of religious and civil monopoly. But time must necessarily work the decay of all human institutions, whose elements have not the principle of cohesion and stability, viz. the design and tendency to confer impartial or competent benefit and protection upon men. This is the end, aim, and

sanction of all social law and civil government. Nor will the politically quickened world, if once emancipated, ever again trust to institutions proved by experience to favour only selfishness of oppression. The only true title of governments to dominion is the implied *trust* tacitly imposed on them by every individual of the community for his defence; and the implied *commission* tacitly charged on them by God, for the faithful and impartial execution of this human trust and divine commission; even the commission of God whose providential regards embrace equally the various grades of his human creatures; and who would not that the lowest were despised, nor the weakest oppressed. But history instructs us that governments have ever abused their divine authority. Therefore, in the righteous and retributive providence of God, empires have displaced empires, and kingdoms have superseded kingdoms. They flourished awhile; but all perished by the just decree of an avenging, though long-suffering providence: because all were unequitable, unjust, cruel, incorrigible. For, "thrones are established only "in righteousness. God stands in the senates and councils of "governments: he judges amongst kings. How long, then, O "kings, will ye judge or govern unjustly, and accept the persons "of the wicked, or favour the oppressive privileges of the proud? "Reform, reform ye civil and responsible ministers of an over- "ruling providence: defend the poor and fatherless: do justice "to the afflicted and needy: deliver the poor and needy out of "the hand of the wicked. But alas! they are infatuated, and "will not be taught: they persist in darkness: the fundamental "principles of civil society being subverted by them. I have "said, O kings, ye are gods; and all of you children of the "most high: but ye shall die like your inferiors, and fall like "one of your own disgraced deputies. Arise, O God; judge the "earth, that thou mayest assert thine inheritance in all nations." Can the christian kingdoms of the world show cause why sentence should not be pronounced against *them* also? Will the historian bear witness for them in arrest of judgment? Surely it were imprudent to invite his testimony: for he could not select a chapter from his book, nor recite a sentence even from his *last page*, that draws not the weary burthen of his monotonous narra-

tive, even cruel war, civil oppression, and tyranny of malignant superstition. And is the present age so barren of significance as to intimate nothing of the intentions of providence? Do "the signs of the times," those unequivocal notices of divine purpose (Math. 16 : 3) indicate none not even the distant approach of some great revolution in European establishments or their civil institutions? Are the progressive disreputation of clerical pretension and ecclesiastical dominion; the disregard and even contempt of things once venerated; the general prevalence of religious dissent, and the call for municipal and even constitutional reform: the march of intellect, as some vaunt it; and the increase of scepticism and licentiousness, as others stigmatize it; effrontery demanding civil rights, where formerly humility petitioned for toleration and participation; disgust at reluctant and tardy concession, and indignation at hardy and determined refusal; lukewarmness and even disaffection towards constitutional fundamentals theoretically good, but practically obstructive; the encroachments and approaches of the besiegers, and the furious desperation of the besieged; misgivings of men's minds at the present phenomena of civil and political transition, and forebodings of coming events;—are not these things the pregnancy of omen to the *ecclesiastical* and even to the *civil* establishments of the christian nations of Europe? Have not some of these signs, both in this and in neighbouring kingdoms, been for four centuries the precursors of great revolutions both ecclesiastical and civil: and are not the minds of men at the present day more deeply imbued, though less violently impelled, by similar sentiments and riper principles, more powerful and portentous because less passionate and evaporating? Observe, too, a political phenomenon distinguishing the peculiar character of the present age from that of former ages of the world. In former ages, the changes that occurred to nations arose from without and resulted from *foreign* conquest: the changes of the present age are from within, and result from the commotions of *citizens* and from the state of men's minds on *civil and religious* interests. The genius of war and conquest seems disposed to sleep. The facilities of international communication have now assembled the nations for reciprocal benefit and mutual counsel,

and for asserting the indefeasible rights of man. Revolution, therefore, or the subversion of civil and religious institutions, rather than conquest or the subversion of states, is the present tendency of Europe. Are not these things the undoubted effects and causes of revolutionary principles slowly operating to the production of sure and certain changes in the social and civil condition of man? Or, on the other hand, are all these portents but the ordinary and unmeaning phenomena of our civil firmament, and the playful and harmless coruscations of the political ether? Surely the vial of *subversion* has been poured out on *the air*: our atmosphere is charged: the electrical elements are developed: and the slightest collision or approximation of the louring and heterogeneous vapours will on some future and perhaps not distant occasion, suffice to kindle the lightning of divine wrath; which, striking towers, steeples, castles, and palaces, will mark them the monuments of providential judgment; and consecrate them (like the crumbling memorials of pagan and monastic and baronial enormities) the roofless, ivy-clad, and picturesque ruins of antiquity.

The seventh vial, therefore, announces the operations of those changes of national sentiment, and those civil and religious contentions amongst European mankind, which, during nearly four centuries have revolutionized and are revolutionizing the world. These commotions of the political and civil world, like the tides of the ocean, have indeed their ebbings and their flowings: but these all tend to a development of mysteries which now lie concealed under the surface of the deep. They first shook the Romish establishment, dividing it into fragments (ch. 16: 19): and they are destined yet to overthrow every species of ecclesiastical tyranny, by the increasing disreputation of its fallacies, as the dawn of social intelligence brightens on the human mind, and as the progress and union of civil and religious liberty shall counteract the former union of civil and religious oppression: thereby developing the truth of God's prophetic word, 2 Thess. 2: 8. But the *complete victory* of "THE WORD OF GOD" (ch. 19: 13) i. e., *the perfect accomplishment of divine prediction and will*,* is by no

* A very common notion prevails amongst millennarians, that the apocalyptic term "the word of God" means the Gospel; and that *the Millennium* is to be established on evangelical principles, or by an universal extension

means seen in that partial suppression or exposure of error which the world has already witnessed in the declension of *Romish* tyranny and superstition. Babylon indeed has fallen. The great whore has been long retreating to the wilderness, where she sits, or will sit, paralyzed and hopelessly stupified in the

and recognition of *the gospel*. A very little reflection, however, or critical consideration, will suffice to convince any serious inquirer, that this view of the gospel, or rather of "the word of God," is entirely arbitrary and far too limited. "The word of God" is represented in scripture to be that manifestation of the Godhead, or that divine agent, "whereby the world was created and is upheld:" (John 1: 2—Heb. 1: 3). The same creative and upholding deity, of course, became in due time the Redeemer; taking to himself the *human nature* or "flesh," in order that he might provide a *human* victim for the atonement of *human* offence, and a *divine righteousness* to supply the want of *human merit and obedience*. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." For when the *first* created man had fallen, and together with him had fallen the whole human race *his* offspring, our very nature thereby becoming changed and losing its primitive *uprightness*: (for, *righteous* it *never* was; there being none *righteous* but God; "and God's very angels being chargeable with *folly*, though not with *sin*; except, indeed, those angels that *sinned* and left their first estate") it required the interference of *the same creative agent* which created man, to execute God's gracious purpose of *redeeming and elevating* our lost nature *by a second, but generative act*; renewing the human creature in the production of "A SECOND MAN," in the *second Adam* or head of a human race. The same word of God, therefore, took to himself *the human nature*: not by human generation or descent from the fallen progenitor of a fallen race, but by an immediate *assumption or investment* of the human body and nature (for "he verily took *our nature* as a seed of Abraham:" Heb. 1: 16), "the animal or human body" of this second man "*being prepared*" for him in the maternal mould, as "*the seed of woman*" (who was also *Adam*, being flesh of his flesh; Gen. 5: 2) for the reception of the *divine* occupant. And thus the *conception*, transmitting the human nature, was the function of the human female; while the *impregnation* conveying the *divine nature* was the mysterious generation of that same Almighty and creative God, which had formerly breathed the breath of life into the dust of the ground, when "man first became a living soul." Let it not be forgotten that *human nature* is not necessarily *sinful*. Adam was not *sinful* at his creation, though he was not *righteous*. Had he been *righteous*, he never could have fallen; for he must, if he were *righteous*, have been of *divine generation*. For, "that which is born of God *sinneth not*; it *cannot sin*: it *cannot die*; because it is born of God" (1 John, 3: 9). Yet was Adam created *upright and not sinful*, though he was *not righteous*. And therefore Jesus Christ, in taking our mere human nature, took not a *sinful nature*; but being God as well as man, he was, though *human*, *RIGHTEOUS ALSO*. It is plain that these things proceed upon a human AND a divine necessity. For, as *human redemption* (comprehending *atonement* and also *human obedience*) must necessarily have been the purchase made by a man: and as *that man* must necessarily have been *created, or divinely begotten for the purpose* (seeing that the *old man*, whose life was forfeited to justice as the penalty of transgression, had tainted the very nature of all his posterity, and could possibly neither pay the penal price of atonement, nor do the work of human redemption and elevation) it follows that the creative or generative power of God

filth of her intoxications, and blood of saints and martyrs. The nations have doubled, or will double, to her double according to her works : and in the cup which she filled to *them* have they filled, or will yet fill, to her double. She too did suddenly experience bitter reverses, even "death, mourning, and famine;"

was necessitated (in order to accomplish the thing divinely intended) to furnish a *human* agent capable of achieving a *divine* work. Thus it is evident that *both* the first and the second man were, each of them, pre-eminently *the son of God* (Luke 3 : 38—Luke 1 : 35). Both had their *human* existence *by creation*, and not by *human pro-creation* ; and both had their *sonship* in one and the same way : for *sonship* relates to *created* beings ; as is evident from that scripture which declares that in the day when the works of nature were created "*all the sons of God*," i. e., all the works then just created or finished, "shouted for joy:" which expression obviously means that they spoke their creator's praise. Let it be remembered also, that "because the holy spirit overshadowed the virgin, ~~THEREFORE~~ that holy thing which was born of her was called *the son of God*." Let that scripture also be remembered which declares, "thou art my son, ~~THIS DAY~~ (and not from all eternity) have I begotten thee." There exists *no scripture* declaring Christ to have been "begotten before the foundation of the world."

Nevertheless, far other things are predicable of the *second* man than of the *first*. The first was the inferior, the second the superior : and obviously the inferior was first in respect of *time*, and the superior second. The first was man *only* ; being "of the earth : " the second was man *AND* "the Lord from heaven : " (1 Cor. 15 : 47). The first was man *only*, and *fallible*, though *not sinful*. The second was man *and God*, and therefore neither sinful nor fallible. The first had *one* nature, viz. the human : the second had a *double* nature, viz. the human and the divine. Of the first man nothing could be predicted but what pertained to *the creature* : of the second man every thing could be predicted that pertained *necessarily* to either or both natures. Consequently, to the one *person* of Jesus Christ was attributable all that pertained *necessarily* to his two natures. Yet, all that pertained to his humanity was obviously attributable to *the man* : all that pertained to his deity was attributable to *the Godhead* ; though in neither character was he to be contemplated as absolutely distinct or separate : his *two* natures being *united in one person*. When therefore the scriptures call him *the mediator*, they emphatically tell us "there is one " God, and one mediator " between that one God and multitudinous man, "*the man* Christ Jesus : " (1 Tim. 2 : 5). For the Godhead being *one* and *only one*, he (the godhead) could not possibly *mediate* between *himself* and man : "for, a mediator is not a mediator of one : but God is one," (Gal. 3 : 20), while man is many ; and Christ was "one amongst the many " brethren." And on the other hand, when the scriptures tell us that "God created all things by Jesus Christ," they *laboriously* explain to us that "the same word whereby all things were created, *took flesh* (the human nature) and we "*then*" beheld his glory as of *the only begotten* of the father, full of grace and truth" (John 1 : 14). By which passage we are simply informed that *creation* was the work of that *word of God*, which in due time took flesh, and *thus* became the only-begotten son of God. And if any one feels a difficulty in interpreting the scriptural epithet "*only-begotten*," let him turn to Hebrews 11 : 17, where he will find the very same epithet applied to Abraham's son Isaac, though at that

having herself felt, what she so long unfeelingly inflicted, viz. the lash of oppression, in out-lawry, persecution and spoliation. But truth has still to accomplish the full declarations of "*the word of God*," in the total overthrow of *all spiritual pretension of ecclesiastical power to political and civil authority*, which the pro-

very time Abraham had *another* son thirteen years older than Isaac. And Josephus, the Jewish historian, speaking of a certain nobleman's *three* sons applies the same epithet "only-begotten" to the *youngest*, but *most favoured* of the three. It is plain therefore that the Greek and Hebrew or scriptural term "only-begotten" means *pre-eminently favoured* or *heir*. And thus Jesus Christ, *as God*, existed of course from eternity. *As man*, he was indeed "fore-ordained or foreknown (*προεγνωμένος*) before the foundation of the world; but was manifested in *latter days*" (1 Pet. 1: 19, 20). And having "been fore-known, or in the counsels of God fore-ordained, before the foundation of the world," he was of course "*loved* before the foundation of the world:" (John 17: 24) In the same manner believers in Christ were "*chosen* in Christ *before the foundation of the world*, being *pre-destined* to adoption:" (Eph. 1: 4, 5). And as no one will argue, that, though *chosen* before the foundation of the world, we also *existed before we were created*; so neither ought it to be argued that Christ, the *second* Adam, existed *as Adam or man* before the *first* Adam had been *created*. *As God*, he of course existed from eternity, and created all things, including his own manhood. And thus the *distinct* things of the *double* nature of Christ are attributable to his *one person*. I will add, that the terms "*created and begotten*," as applied in scripture to the person of Christ (for he is declared to be the *first-born* of every creature) have entire reference to his *human*, and not at all to his *divine* nature. And therefore *no scripture exists* declaring him to have been either created or begotten before the period of his earthly existence. *No scripture exists* declaring him to have been "*created or begotten*" before the world's foundation; though the Athanasian creed pronounces the dogma. Any passage of scripture, from whence such a notion is, in the opinion of some to be *inferred*, applies with equal force to *disciples*; of whom it will scarcely be asserted, that they *existed* before their *creation*. The scriptures emphatically apply to Christ the two appellations "son of God" and "son of Man." The former, "son of God," is common to Christ and to Adam (Luke 3: 38), and refers exclusively to his *creation* as the *second* Adam or head of a human race: the latter, "son of Man," is proper to Christ, and *not to Adam*, who had no *human* parent; and refers exclusively to his *human generation*, as having taken, in the maternal mould, the very nature of those in whose stead he undertook to stand and suffer as their substitute and mediator. (Heb. 2: 16—1 Tim. 2: 5).

These considerations of the many and diversified operations of "God's word" suffice for the conclusion that the term "the word of God" has properly a far more comprehensive sense than that partial one which would limit it to the *gospel* of Jesus Christ, or the *evangelical* truths of the *grace* of God: and that the *triumph of the word of God* over the Beast and the false Prophet, as represented in the 19th chapter of the Revelation, does not signify the *universal* diffusion and influence of divine or evangelical truth over *every individual* of the nations, nor over *every individual* subject of the previously false professions or establishments of Christianity; but simply the *power of God* fulfilling the various purposes of his counsel, and the *predicted judgments* of his word.

phetic scriptures have destined to termination at a period *subsequent to the fall of Babylon* and to "the ascent of the smoke of her burning." And marshalled though the forces of Antichrist even now are, at the active instigation of devout, deceived and self-interested men ("the unclean spirits going forth to the kings of *the earth* and of *the whole world* to gather them to the battle of that great day of God *almighty*")—"the word of God" or the power accomplishing his predicted purpose, has yet to triumph fully and finally over *the Beast and the false Prophet* on the field of booty or of "THE UNCOVERING OF SPOILS." It were unreasonable to expect that an ecclesiastical power which, according to the prophecy of Daniel, has "*divided the earth for gain*," should quickly or quietly resign a possession sanctioned by the prescription of ages: nor can we wonder that the possession of a prescriptive and legal privilege should, in defence of such a privilege, instigate the civil sovereign to resistance by every argument that persuasion and spiritual intimidation and influence could employ. Great, therefore, and protracted must be the operation of that religious and political contest which shall revolutionize the public sentiment; extorting from legislation the sacrifice of religious prejudice,—and from constitutional possession the surrender of lucrative endowment: a revolution great enough to be characterized as "*a great earthquake SUCH AS WAS NOT SINCE MEN WERE UPON THE EARTH.*" This point of civil contest and legislative confiscation I conceive to be that which apocalyptic figure styles *a place*, and is appropriately "*called in the Hebrew tongue ARMAGEDDON;*" in English "THE CONFISCATION OF SPOILS." In this manner as I apprehend will fall *the empire of Antichrist*, or the present ecclesiastical, or the united *civil and spiritual*, tyranny of Western Europe. The *present* state of the human mind or of public opinion, though by no means satisfied with the temporal circumstances, civil incumbrances, and political obstructions of their state-religions, does not appear to be ripe enough for the revolution. The reflecting reader will observe an important circumstance distinguishing the modern ecclesiastics from the officials of the primitive apostolic, and even of *the primitive heretical*, churches. The primitive officials of *all sects* existed without any state-provision or endowment: their sta-

bility was unbeholden to any *such* support. Indeed the primitive officials of the apostolic churches, and, we may presume of their rival or the *heretical* churches, were numerous or at least indefinite in number : and no such official as a Priest or as a Clergyman, existed ; though without doubt influential individuals amongst the Elders or Bishops took a leading part at all times in the affairs of the various independent congregations, and at length engrossed undue influence and power. If the state-endowment were to be withdrawn from the modern clergy, the whole ecclesiastical establishment of the nation would at once fall.

I have now so fully anticipated the 17th, 18th, and 19th chapters, that I may properly commit them to the reader's own translation : first observing, that none but those of the Romish persuasion will doubt that the *eighteenth* chapter records the political fall of Popery : and that none but Protestants will doubt that the *nineteenth* chapter records the subsequent overthrow of ALL RELIGIOUS ASCENDENCY whatsoever. And I therefore now proceed to the 20th, 21st, and 22nd chapters.

SEC. XVI.—*Chapters XVII., XVIII., XIX., and XX. of the Book of Revelation.—The Millennium.*

THE twentieth chapter begins with the establishment of the Millennium upon the issue of the great battle of Armageddon, or the contest which terminates in the *uncovering or confiscation of ecclesiastical spoils*, and in the delivering of the revenues of *kings and nobles* to the rapacity of the hungry observers of the figurative battle or contest described in the preceding or nineteenth chapter.

I know of course that this last declaration must be viewed by most persons as highly offensive. I shall nevertheless perhaps be credited when I affirm that my interpretation of the passage is, or rather would be, grievous to myself, if it were not that I know the intentions of Providence, in this revolution, are favourable to my country and to the real welfare even of the parties denounced. The candid and intelligent reader, however, *will perceive that all* the interpretations proposed by me for the

figures employed in the book, are ruled, and ruled *absolutely*, by a *principle* of interpretation which I am bound by consistency to follow out. I would ask the reader, then, does he think that I have given the true interpretation of the figurative expression contained in chapter 17 : 16, which declares of "*the whore of Babylon*" (whoever she be) that "the nations should begin to eat her flesh ?" Now, if that figurative expression means, as I have said it does, that the Protestant establishments and the adherents of the governments should *seize and appropriate the revenues* of the Romish church ; how can the call, in chapter 19, to "the fowls of *heaven* TO EAT THE FLESH of *KINGS AND GREAT MEN*," signify, in respect of *civil* establishments, any other thing than what the very same term in chapter 17 signifies in respect of the *Romish ecclesiastical* establishment ? They who rejoice in denouncing their adversaries will of course indignantly resist the denunciations of themselves : but how can we avoid the application of similar events to similar terms ? It were unfair to attribute to *me*, what I merely give as the legitimate and *unavoidable* result of a *principle of interpretation*. I feel, in common with the most loyal of my readers, an ardent attachment to the civil constitution of my country : and in my earnest desire for her prosperity, I sincerely breathe the aspiration, "*esto perpetua*." Moreover, I conceive it to be *possible*, that is, compatible with the terms of divine prediction, that what is obnoxious, in our civil system, to divine displeasure, may, in the providence of God, be abolished without the necessity of destroying all or any part of it that is not reprobate, or that is admirable and fit to be retained. This only will I persist in : if sovereigns, governments, and legislatures, in any country, and of whatsoever approved form of constitution, will persist in abusing the divine trust reposed in them for the protection of their charge ;—if they will not "*deliver the poor and needy out of the hands of him that spoileth them*," and will not "*execute true judgment*,"—I believe they will stand obnoxious to the providential wrath of God ; and they themselves may rid *me* of the odium of prediction, and may themselves prophesy the consequences.

I now proceed to say, that the real nature of the Millennium

may be clearly gathered, not only from the past transactions recorded in the prior chapters,—but also from this very twentieth chapter: care being taken to interpret emblem emblematically, i. e., to interpret *this* chapter consistently with the interpretation of the rest of the book, or figuratively and not literally. Let the student then reflect—that the influence and agency of Satan upon the three great national or political establishments historically recorded to have been concerned in the opposition of mankind to the establishment of Christ's spiritual kingdom (viz., the Jews, the pagan Gentiles, and the Gentile christian, but spurious establishments of the world) have been described in the triple series of the seals, the trumpets, and the vials. This threefold succession of political opposition has been met by the triple series of God's political judgments. Reflecting therefore on the mode and nature of that hostile influence whereby Satan has been permitted to prompt the measures of governments, and thus to manifest his opposition to the establishment of Messiah's spiritual kingdom or of the association of disciples, or the church of Christ; can the student be at a loss to know what is meant by the figurative representation of “binding Satan with a chain?” Can it mean anything else than the providential power of God restraining him from the exercise of such political and civil influence in future? And can it be doubted what would be the condition of the true servants of God or of Christ's church under such a state of participation in civil privilege and of exemption from civil penalty or prejudice? Surely, the words of Christ may be adopted at the present day; and we may truly say that “from the days of John the Baptist, or the very annunciation of Messiah's kingdom, to the present moment, Christ's kingdom has suffered oppression, and oppressors have violently and cruelly opposed it.” The world ever was, and ever will be, an unbelieving world: and therefore mankind, in their individual and personal capacities, will by the necessity of their nature ever hate, pervert, or scorn the truth of God in its purity and simplicity, as it is revealed in Jesus Christ: however possible or even probable it be, that in ages to come the name of Christ may cover the habitable earth. But it is not of essential necessity to the nature of mankind that governments should either advocate or oppress any

religion, true or false, whose moral practice is not opposed to *their* beneficial rule. And therefore it certainly is not a wild, nor in my conviction, an unscriptural imagination, to expect that governments may become instructed by the experience of history, and may learn to use the legitimate influence of their authority in a directly contrary mode to that which they have been unhappily addicted to; and may be made instrumental in the hand of God to keep down *all* aspirants to religious ascendancy. This indeed is the chief plea made in behalf of our own national church-establishment amongst the various bodies of dissent: though, at length, a persuasion is very general, that *our national church-establishment is*, with the hopes of the treacherous, and with the mistake of the honest, *the real abettor and friend of that church which Protestantism stands opposed to, and has reason to apprehend as the foe, not only to religious, but also to civil liberty: and whose priests are ever pledged to institute and exercise their tyranny over men's consciences, persons, and convictions; and to oppress and persecute, with the full convictions of bigotry, every individual who dares to entertain an opinion of his own.* They who tremble for the cause of Christ whenever it shall lose the support of human or civil aid, must have forgotten the fate of that presumption which put forth a human hand to steady the ark of God. They should reflect that "the stone which was cut without hands," and which rolls on in its course, "grinding to powder the brittle materials and fragile members upon which it falls," must surely be able to *sustain itself* with the momentum of its own proper impulse. And as it appears by the Apocalypse or revelation of God's providential dealings and *motives*, that the calamities of nations have been visited on them mainly for *their* national sin and social error evinced in the unequitable, tyrannical, persecuting, and cruel measures of *their governments*, and in the abuse of power committed to those governments by God; so I do think we may reasonably indulge the hope and conviction that a providential blessing will descend upon nations and upon their governments (which are divine institutions of civil society, or recognised by God as *the institutions of nature*) i. e., *upon every ordinance of man*,"—when our legislators and governors, in conformity with national disposition, or with the sup-

port of the intellectual and influential portions of the community, shall become "*God's ministers for good*;" or when, in the apocalyptic language, "*the kingdoms of the world shall become the Lord's and his Christ's*," i. e., when by impartiality and equity toward all persuasions and all ranks of men, they shall repress spiritual ambition and selfish pretension, and shall thereby maintain, *even though unconsciously*, the peace of the kingdom of God. By thus acting, governments would disencumber themselves of an insupportable burthen and impracticable task; greatly simplifying their work, and facilitating their beneficent purposes. Whenever, and wherever nations and the governments of nations shall have learnt this lesson then and there, I conclude, will "*Satan have been bound*," and "*the Millennium*" will have arrived. And whenever, and wherever, under such a government, the fear of God and the spirit of obedience to *the apostolic word and institutions* shall influence any of the professors of Christ, and shall exclude from their religious associations *all human wisdom*, together with *the principles of the world* and its social and civil authorities and political interference,—then and there will *the kingdom of heaven* have attained the utmost glory which I believe it to be susceptible of, or the word of God to have destined it to, previously to the judgment day.

The period of a "thousand years" means, I presume, some very long but indefinite time. Certainly, if a prophetic day signifies an historical year,—then *a thousand prophetic years*, or *three hundred and sixty thousand days* must signify *three hundred and sixty thousand historical years*. Shall I allow myself to entertain the uncharitable apprehension that this or even three hundred and sixty thousand stronger objections would not balk the millennialist in his favourite pursuit!

John "saw THRONES, and they SAT UPON them, and JUDGMENT was given to them." I have marked in capitals the three expressions "thrones"—"sat upon"—and "judgment"—that the reader may note their exact coincidence with the terms of *Christ's promise to the twelve Apostles personally*:—"in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve throne, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Many of the apocalyptic

figures are palpably a repetition of Christ's expressions : thus corroborating a remark formerly made, that *metaphorical* language is almost synonymous with *hieroglyphical* representation. I conceive that the thrones which John saw, represent the establishment of Christ's veritable rule of kingdom, by the unequivocal recognition of the *apostolic* authority in the church of Christ, the kingdom of God. Thus will be fulfilled the two conditions necessary to the full blessedness of the reign of Christ during the Millennium, viz. : temporal peace and spiritual obedience:

John "saw also *the souls* of them that had been beheaded for the witness of Jesus ; "and of them that had worshipped neither the Beast nor his Image : and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But *the rest of the dead*" (that is, the false professors of past ages) "*lived not again TILL THE "THOUSAND YEARS WERE FINISHED,*" that is, *till the loosing of Satan again at the expiration of the Millennium.* "This is the first resurrection ; on such the second death has no power."

Adhering pertinaciously to our principle of interpretation, viz. that the whole book of Revelation is figurative, and therefore that its interpretation is never to be literal, where it is practicable to adopt the figurative,—we are enabled confidently to decide that this resurrection is a figurative one : and that the Apostle's seeing *the souls* of men *living again* simply means that *the spirit* of apostolic obedience, which had primitively *animated* the faithful witnesses of truth, was now to be *revived* ; or that the cause of truth in which the confessors of Christ had bled or suffered was now to prosper *as the consequence of their fidelity and testimony* : and that the spiritual reign of Christ, which they had been given generously to anticipate, was now to flourish. In a similar sense, and under an obligation of consistency, it must be admitted that the *spirit of disobedience* which *animated* the false professors of past ages, *will revive* at the termination of the Millennium ; *TILL* when "*the rest of the dead are not TO LIVE AGAIN,*"—and when "Satan is to be loosed out of his prison, "and shall go forth to deceive the nations that are in the four "*quarters of the earth.*" Such, most undeniably, is the grammatical force of the word "*till,*" wheresoever it occurs. When

the scriptures, for instance, inform us that "Joseph knew not his wife Mary *till* she brought forth her "*first-born* son,"—are we not plainly told that he *did* live with her as her husband *after* that event: and by the term "*first-born*" are we not informed that *other* children were afterwards, or might have been, born to her. If the Evangelist who relates the pregnancy of Mary and the birth of Jesus, had understood the doctrine of the immaculate, or rather of the *virgin*, life of Mary, can we believe that he would have employed such lax or rather such significant expressions as the words "*till*" and "*first-born*?" would he not have assured us that her husband *never knew* her in after life? would he not have said "*only-begotten*" instead of "*first-born*?"

Such figurative modes of expression as "*souls living again*" are justifiable and even common in ordinary historical narrative: and we employ them in our daily conversation without even noticing that we are speaking in apocalyptic language. Does not the secular historian say, that "*the spirit* of our patriotic and ancestral martyrs *revived* in the persons of our modern reformers?" Would it be an unintelligible or extravagant hyperbole to say that *the spirit* of Hampden *revived* in some modern patriot? Or that *the spirit* of Stephen, Peter, and Paul *revived* in the persons of any modern individuals who should devote themselves to the same cause for which those primitive martyrs bled? Emblematical and symbolical allegory, or hieroglyphical representation, differs very little from common or colloquial metaphor. The difference is scarcely more than that the figurative style pervades the whole of a hieroglyphical composition, which will not tolerate a moment's departure from the fictitious mode, nor the least mixture of simple description. When we read in common history that "*the spirit* of the primitive martyrs *revived* in the persons of the protestant reformers," or that "*the spirit* of Hampden *revived* in the persons of modern patriots," are we not *literally* told that *their souls lived again*? For surely, the term "*spirit*" is, in ordinary parlance, no other than *soul*; and "*to revive*" is, according to grammatical etymology, no other than *to live again*. The occasional use of such figures is mere metaphor; but the same language and style, when *exclusively* employed, and not accommodated to popular intelligence,

presents us with a *hieroglyphical* narrative. And if the agents alluded to in such a narrative should be represented by analogies; the agencies imbodyed; and the impersonalities personified;—as for instance, if the human world at large were represented by the ocean; nations by rivers; communities and tribes by streams and fountains; kings and governors by the sun and stars; civil establishments by the fixed earth; subversions of establishments by earthquakes;—if empires were represented by imaginary and symbolical creatures; and provinces or kingdoms by the horns of such animals:—if religion were personated by a woman; its character by the colour of her garments; and the comparative duration of political powers and of other events, by numbers stated in arithmetical proportions;—death by a living existence; divine or judicial destruction by a lake of consuming fire and brimstone; and irreparable forfeiture and perpetual execration by everlasting torment:—then we should be presented with just such an allegory as the Apocalypse. I will add, that as “the reign of Christ” does not *necessarily* require that his presence should be literal, personal, or visible; so, when it is pointedly declared that *the souls* of the confessors are to live again for a thousand years,—we are expressly instructed that their life and reign will not occur by the literal or corporeal presence of their *bodies*. The term “*first resurrection*” is a term and doctrine not to be found in any other part of scripture. On this very ground many persons in the early centuries of Christianity repudiated the book of Revelation. Is it reasonable then that this expression should be interpreted literally, and thus be made to form a solitary exception to the whole *figurative* tenor of the Apocalypse, and to the *doctrinal* tenor of the whole Bible? Is it not manifest from other scriptures written in the ordinary style of *unfigurative* narrative that “the just are to rise from the dead *in the resurrection at the LAST day*?” Does not the Apostle Paul inform the faithful, that “we shall not all sleep; but we shall all be changed; and *at the last trump* the dead shall be raised incorruptible”? Does he not say, that “such of us as shall be alive at the coming of the Lord, shall not prevene them that are asleep;” for that “*at the sounding of the trump of God THE DEAD IN CHRIST SHALL RISE FIRST*”?

Every reasonable consideration, and every scriptural argument, conspire to prove that "*the first resurrection*" is not a literal one. But there is an infatuation in the popular persuasion of an error, which prompts its advocates to disregard and condemn all physical impossibility, and to think that such contempt is a concession most complimentary to faith. And though the fallacy of such argumentative violence is triumphantly asserted against the doctrine of transubstantiation and the real presence, yet in interpreting the Revelation, the camel may reasonably be swallowed.

Now, we find that a period of time,—very long perhaps in reality, although of short duration comparatively with the Millennium,—occurs between the termination of the Millennium and the judgment-day: a period most certainly long enough for the unbelieving hosts of mankind (Gog and Magog) to engage in an attempt to extirpate by persecution the whole association of disciples; and during which period "Satan is again to be let loose." This period, though declared to be "a little season," is not *defined* by the prophet. But we may safely and surely conclude that the operations of Christ's enemies, as described in the universal movement of hostility, must necessarily occupy a very considerable time; and that "*the littleness of the season*" must be estimated *comparatively*: comparatively, I say, with the preceding *long* period of the Millennium. During all this considerable time *the souls* of the unjust must,—from the previous expression "*till the thousand years are ended,*"—be considered as "*living again.*" And what reasonable interpretation can we assign to this apocalyptic existence, but such as I have already given, viz. that *the spirit* of ancient *political* opposition shall be *revived*; Satan being again permitted "to go forth to deceive the nations of the four quarters of the earth, to gather them together to battle?"

"When," therefore, "the thousand years are ended, Satan is to be loosed out of his prison, and is to go forth to deceive the nations that are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of saints about."

“ and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, *where the Beast and the false Prophet are* ; and *they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*”

Now, after reading this description of Gog and Magog and their extended operations on the breadth or whole surface of the earth, I would ask the unprejudiced reader—is it compatible with the terms of such an account to suppose that Christ, during the just preceding Millennium, had been, and still was literally, ostensibly, and personally reigning, in an ostensible kingdom extending over all *mankind*, as the Millennialists fondly suppose he will? Surely it is impossible that these nations (represented as inhabiting the four quarters of the earth, and in number as the sand of the sea, moving their countless legions, the legions of the world’s habitable breadth, to *compass the camp of saints*) should *ever* have been *previously contained within that camp*, or were, during the preceding Millennium, the subjects of Christ’s kingdom, and *living during all that time obediently to Christ’s personal presence and rule!* Equally absurd would it be to suppose that such a *camp* had ever overawed so vast a host as this which represents mankind.

Let the reader reflect, that the doctrine of a *Millennium* is taught *only in the Apocalypse*: and though the peace and glory of Christ’s kingdom are abundantly spoken of in other parts of scripture, yet can the Millennium *and all the circumstances pertaining to it* be ascertained *only* by a correct interpretation of the terms describing it in the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse.

Surely then, the Millennialists must be in utter error respecting THE NATURE of *Christ’s kingdom*: and hence their error respecting *the nature* of THE MILLENNIUM. Gog and Magog (whencesoever they *originally* came) are not the inhabitants of or natives of Russia, nor of Siberia, nor of any part of Northern Europe and Asia, as the learned have taught, and as some of the commentators labour to establish. But they are (as the very narrative of the Prophet himself declares) the representatives of *mankind* extending to the utmost verge of “the four points of the compass.” FOR,

We read in scripture that Noah, from whom the whole earth was peopled, had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Shem, was, as the learned informs us, the father of all the children of Eber, besides the Persians, Arabians, Syrians, Lydians, and many other nations of Asia. Ham had for his descendants, the Egyptians, Lybians, Abyssinians, Canaanites, &c.; and was pronounced by his father to be destined, in the posterity of his son Canaan, to servitude to his two brethren. "God was to enlarge Japheth, who was to dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan was to be the servant of both." It appears, then, that mankind were to merge, as it were, in the posterity of Japheth. And if we consider how extensively this family have already migrated and almost occupied the globe; exterminating or ousting the comparatively few or more feeble original occupants: and how probable, and indeed morally certain, it is, that their future migrations and multiplications will hereafter engross every habitable spot of the earth yet unoccupied: we must acknowledge that Noah's prophecy is, in great part, fulfilled even at the present day; and seems likely to be fulfilled to the utmost possible sense of the patriarch's marvellous prediction. Now, Japheth's two eldest sons, as we read in Genesis, were Gog and Magog. And these two sons (as appears by Ezekiel, 38) are accounted in scripture to include, as the representatives of that patriarch's posterity, the whole family of Japheth: just as Judah includes, at the present day, all the other tribes of Israel. Hence it is plain that the Gog and Magog of the Apocalypse are the representatives of *mankind* "*in the four quarters of the earth;*" for how shall the mysterious terms of scripture be explained, but by the information of scripture? And for what purpose, I may ask, were the genealogies of the sons of Noah furnished in Genesis, unless it were to supply information concerning the development of God's purposes and predictions?

What is to be the particular *occasion* of their hostility to the kingdom of heaven, at the termination of the Millennium (if indeed any particular occasion be intended, which I see no reason to suppose) we need not guess: for not even a figurative hint is furnished to us; and impossible is it for us of the present

day to form even a conception of what may be the style, mode, and fashion of mankind's sentiments in perhaps thousands of years hence. We may infer indeed, that as "the binding of Satan" means the depriving him of political and civil influence to oppress and persecute; so "the loosing" of him means the restoring to him the same or similar political and civil influence: for as to *moral* influence over mankind viewed in their individual or private capacities, and not viewed with reference to their political or civil establishments, we may be sure that the Millennium will never for a moment change the ungodly disposition and unbelieving condition of mankind. Nor do I see any unequivocal intimation in scripture that true Christianity or veritable discipleship will ever, even during the Millennium, be largely extended amongst the multiplying professors of Christ's name. *The glory* of Messiah's kingdom is seen, not in the numbers, but in the obedience of his subjects.

The comparison of the hosts of Gog and Magog to the number of "the sand of the sea," and their extended march "upon the breadth of the earth," seem plainly to intimate some universal movement of hostility against the truth, that is, against *the very name* of Christ, amongst the nations of mankind; and consequently a far more extensive system of opposition than that of either of the three political establishments subverted by the seals, trumpets, and vials; and far less disguised, I apprehend, than the opposition presented by Antichrist. For as it is an incontrovertible proposition that Antichrist must necessarily make a spurious *profession* of Christ; so I infer, that the opposition of Gog and Magog (it not being designated in terms proper to Antichrist) must necessarily be made *without any such spurious profession*; in other words, I apprehend, that the holy spirit means to intimate to us that the opposition of mankind made to the truth of God at the conclusion of the very long period of peace vouchsafed to the people of God during the Millennium, and of course furnishing the proximate cause of the termination of that peace, will be conducted under the principles and profession of what is popularly called *infidelity*. But inasmuch as *it is scarcely* conceivable that such universal, determined, and *newly adopted* hostility should, after so long a period of tole-

ration, have been altogether unprovoked ; it is not unreasonable to suppose that the provocation then to be furnished to this extraordinary movement of universal and political or state-opposition must have been long and universally operating. Such prolonged operation can scarcely be explained except on the supposition that the general immoral and depraved conduct of a large portion or majority of the *professing* world, favoured by the preceding very long period of peace and privilege, had rendered the christian name offensive, and had thus instituted amongst non-professors and their state-governments a general movement of effort to extirpate all who professed the name of Christ, which had now become obnoxious by the general depravity of the degenerate sects. This view is confirmed by reflecting on Christ's words,—“when the Son of Man cometh” (in judgment) “shall he find faith *on the earth* ?” It is however idle and even presumptuous pertinaciously to maintain *any* imaginary explanation of this distant, terminal, and unexplained movement. Let us not however for a moment conceive that the profession of Christianity will, at that distant day, be a rare thing on the earth, or that a decrease of the numbers of christians will be the cause of the effort to extirpate the profession of the truth of Christ. The very contrary is plainly intimated. For, an universal movement of hostility to the name of Christ necessarily implies that the professors of the name must be numerous and *universally scattered* amongst the various nations of the globe : “yet (in spite of such universal prevalence of Christianity) at Christ's coming, *shall he find true faith on the earth*” ?

The remaining prophetic descriptions of the book I feel more disposed to pass over than to comment on. I conclude, that “fire coming down from God out of heaven and consuming his “enemies ; and the Devil that deceived them being cast into a “lake of fire and brimstone where the Beast and the false Prophet already are, and where *they* shall be tormented day and “night for ever and ever,”—means that the judgments of God, whether natural or supernatural, will destroy them at that awful day which is to terminate the existence of Satan himself, just, ~~as~~ *the existences* of the Roman empire and of political Christia

or the two-horned Beast are represented to have been already the subjects of providential destruction. And according to the strictly figurative meaning and consistency of interpretation which allegorical composition demands, I conclude that *the eternal torments* which the Beast and the false Prophet are consigned to (for, the *Greek* text unequivocally and grammatically determines the torment to *them*) cannot be *literal* torments ; but that they express merely that utter destruction, *with perpetual infamy and execration*, which THE PERSONIFICATION of civil and religious evil and diabolical malignity REQUIRE to be FIGURATIVELY represented by PERSONAL AND EVERLASTING consciousness of suffering. This view is absolutely confirmed by the prophet's declaration that THE PERSONIFICATIONS of physical or natural evil—"DEATH AND HELL" (hades or the grave)—"*were cast into THE VERY SAME LAKE.*"

John "saw a great white throne : and from the face of him that sat on it, *the earth and the heaven* fled away, and there was found no place for them." *White* being the common or metaphorical emblem of holiness, the white throne means the last judgment of the Son of God, "to whom all judgment has been committed, both in heaven and in earth ;" and at the manifestation of whose *personal* advent the social and civil state of the world disappeared : nor were the former establishments of mankind, in separate national associations, any longer compatible with God's providential purposes, nor subservient to the beatific condition of the human being, and to the renovation of God's creation. This is the second advent of Christ, who will then come accompanied with all his saints (the second ADAM, whose human nature is now glorified and spiritual,—with his posterity also, who will then be glorified and spiritual) according to sundry scriptures, especially that which declares that "those which sleep in Christ will Christ bring with him : " and again, "behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to take vengeance" &c. &c.

I would pointedly observe, that the declaration that, in the new order of things, "there was no place for *the heaven* ; but that it had *fled away*,"—determines this term "*heaven*" (the *apocalyptic* term descriptive of former establishments) to the *governments* of the various nations. And of course, consequently,

the contrasted term "*the earth*" is thereby determined to *the national establishments*, subjected to these divine institutions of civil rule. For if the apocalyptic term "*heaven*" signified the metaphorical place of God's residence, we cannot conceive how it could possibly be said to have *fled away*, or that *there was no place for it* in the new order of things.

The judgment day had now come ; and the doom of each individual of the human race is pronounced with a clear display of divine righteousness. And according to that scripture which declares that "*the last enemy to be destroyed is death*,"—so now "*death and the grave*" (*hades*, translated "*hell*") are cast into the lake of *fire* ; which element is hereby clearly demonstrated to be the emblem of *termination, extinction, and judicial destruction*, AND NOT of *literal torment*. And all, whose faith in Christ's promises had not sufficed to support them in patient obedience to God's word and will,—all, whose names were not found in the book of life,—who had not recognised and *confessed* God's manifestation of himself in human nature, even Jesus Christ, the Saviour as well as the Creator of the world,—were the subjects of the same destruction. This is that "*everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels*:" this is that "*destruction, with which the wicked shall be punished from the presence of the Lord*," and "*whereof death is to be the last subject*."

Death, the last enemy, being now destroyed, the end of all things had now passed, and the kingdom of Messiah himself terminates. He had now "*reigned till he had put all enemies under his feet*." And thus, "*as by man came death, by man comes also the resurrection of the dead*." And "*all things being now subdued*" by and to him whom their subjection was committed to, "*the anointed king of Zion delivers up the kingdom to God, even his father, that God may be all in all*." But Christ is still the redemption of his people ; and his presence is their light. (ch. 21 : 23.)

The Prophet now "*saw a new heaven and a new earth* ; for, the former had passed away, and there was *no more sea*."

Hence we may clearly collect, that in the day of God's renovation of "*the whole creation*," there will be an entire change of *humanity and of those civil institutions, social conditions and poli-*

tical establishments of distinct national tribes, which the necessities of our fallen nature have instituted : and that mankind will not, in their future state of spiritual metamorphosis, exist that heterogeneous mass, whose discordant elements constitute the various families of the world, and the jarring divisions of nations. But now, when our nature shall be no longer fallen ; when “ our bodies shall have been changed ; when this (now) natural shall have become spiritual ; when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall be invested with immortality ;—former things will have passed away, and all human and earthly things will have been made new.” And though “ the elements of nature will be dissolved ; and the earth and all the works that are therein shall be destroyed ;”—nevertheless they who believe God’s promises, “ look for new heavens” (a total change of all social institutions and *civil* governments) “ and a new earth” (a different establishment of mankind) “ wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

The remainder of the book is a figurative description of the spiritual glory, perfection, and blessedness of the kingdom of God ; wherein the peculiar reign of the anointed one will have ceased : but wherein his presence will be our light and life ; and “ *we shall reign with him*” (i. e. I presume, over all the mundane works of God’s hands) “ for ever and ever.”

The number “ twelve” and its multiples, so conspicuous in the description of the beatific state of human nature and of the church, or of *New Jerusalem*, are obviously significant of *excellence and perfection* : and the palpable application of the number to this signification denotes plainly, not only *its own emblematical* force, but also that of *all the other numbers of the book*. There are *twelve* gates of the city, with the names of the *twelve* tribes of Israel written on them, and *twelve* angels standing at them. Its walls, with *twelve* foundations having the names of the *twelve Apostles* written in them, are *twelve times twelve* cubits high ; and *twelve* thousand furlongs is the length of each side of its square. It will of course be remembered that the *metaphorical* language of the *unhieroglyphical* scriptures declares the church of God to be “ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.” The tree of life

also, growing in the midst of the city, bears *twelve* kinds of fruit ; one kind in each of the *twelve* months of the year. We therefore cannot possibly mistake the virtue of the apocalyptic number "*twelve*."

I will remark also that the description of *the Tree of Life*, bearing twelve fruits (a manifest allusion to the apostolic truth) and whose leaves are "*for the healing of the nations*" (a declaration evidently significant of spiritual life or *redemption*) plainly proves that *the two trees* mentioned in the second chapter of Genesis, are not to be understood as *literal trees* : and consequently, that the entire divine narrative of the *garden of Eden and of Man's fall* is a *veiled* exhibition of important and awful and *truthful facts*, which will never be comprehended by any one whose timidity or diffidence of the divine narrative will not permit him to approach,—and consequently whose discernment is insufficient to *penetrate*—"THE VEIL," and read the mystery that glimmers through it. The obstinacy and bigotry of error may plume itself on a pertinacious adherence to *the letter*, under a pretence of resisting the *licence of speculativeness*. True faith, being quick and intuitive of *the spirit of the letter*, is indeed a courageous trustfulness. While, on the other hand, obstinacy is strangely adventurous of the wildest conceits favourable or pandering to its prejudices. It is indeed wonderful how easily and largely obstinacy can indulge the very licence which it professes to resist.

SEC. XVII.—Conclusion.

THUS have I finished my task. In the course of it I have pursued one leading object, viz., a *principle* of interpretation suitable to the nature, and adequate to a reasonable solution, of the various mysteries of the mysterious book : nor am I conscious of having once deviated from the direct line of pursuit proposed and adopted by me. Of course, an interpretation so contrary to popular persuasion and to the favourite schemes of enthusiasm, cannot but incur the unqualified and severe censure of many. A determination to adhere strictly to my principle has compelled me to re-

nounce many of my own previous conceptions : and, in doing so, I feel satisfied that I have corrected erroneous prejudices. I know, indeed, that *truth*, by the admirable accordance of its innumerable facts, will probably so far stagger even an obstinate opponent, as to cause him a temporary and no inconsiderable shock from the unexpected perception of their singular propriety, felicity, and sufficiency. But error is too feeble to mature a conception of truth ; and is often too powerfully or selfishly interested in its own maintenance, to regard the impulse of an argument that appeals to the understanding against ancient prejudice, supported by present convenience and perhaps by personal interest ; and so the partial discomposure is soon re-adjusted. But to those who have an ear for what the spirit says to the church of Christ,—and who have an eye to admire that species of glory which receives not a ray of its lustre from earthly magnificence,—I would address myself, and ask them—was ever miracle more miraculous than this history of worldly occurrences written before their event? So accurate is the history, and so exact the representation throughout, that I am persuaded, if there did not exist the most incontestible evidence of the antiquity of the apocalypse,—men who might chance to understand its language and figures, but who did not believe its divine truth, would ridicule the credulity that should assert the authenticity or even the antiquity of the book. Its various matter receives light from sundry scriptures, and sheds it on them. It even explains, as it is explained by, secular history ; elucidating many obscure points which the confusion had rendered equivocal. And the histories of the world for the last eighteen hundred years seem written expressly for the verification of its predictions. Here then are proof and confirmation abundant of the believer's faith : for the resurrection of one from the dead would not afford more, nor indeed so great a body of evidence.

It is manifest from certain passages of the New Testament, that the early disciples were deeply interested in the consideration of some of the same topics as are detailed in the Apocalypse. Probably, indeed, their interest was more immediately excited by that portion of then future history (then imminent indeed, but not then past, as some would labour to prove at the present

day*) which related to the destruction of Jerusalem and *the abolition of the Mosaic dispensation amongst the Jews* ; which prediction of abolition the Gentile churches very naturally misapplied to their apprehension of Christ's final "coming" to judge the world, instead of his "coming" in judgment on the Jews. And perhaps the seventh verse of the last chapter of the Apocalypse more immediately refers to that event. But in all the bearings of the entire subject, we see abundant reasons to admire the declaration of the third verse of the first chapter, "blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the word of this prophecy, and *keep those things* which are written therein." My purpose will have been answered, if the faith and patience of sincere christians shall have been confirmed and instructed by a view of the verification of the prophecy.

The study of the Revelation must, I conceive, have failed to impart to the reader the benefit designed by the narrative, if the student rises from its perusal otherwise than with a mind adequately influenced by irrefragable evidence of the truth of Christ, and powerfully raised towards that elevation of conviction which may be supposed to attend the view of a miracle. This and the consolation of hope to those who suffer in the cause of Christ (and who that takes part in it, does not suffer?) constitute, I conceive, the blessedness promised to the reader and *observer* of the prophecy. Those suffering believers who lived in the days when the prophecy was uttered, *but in no part as yet fulfilled*,—were, of course, supported by the consolation and hope which, *their own faith in the prophetic narrative* supplied. *Their faith* could indeed have received no possible *confirmation* from predictions *not then accomplished* : *their faith* enabled them to extract *only consolation* under the hope and assurance that their deliverance

*History relates neither the period when John's banishment to Patmos commenced nor when it terminated. Therefore even though it were proved that John's residence in Patmos continued *subsequently* to the destruction of Jerusalem, there would exist no reason whatever for supposing that *the Revelation* was written *after* that event. His banishment to Patmos, whensoever it commenced, *must* have been very near the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. And the notice both at the commencement and at the termination of the prophecy, that "*the time is at hand*," favors altogether the conclusion that Jerusalem was not yet destroyed at the time when the prophecy was uttered.

from greivous persecution was *the promise of divine truth*. But *we* who after the lapse of ages and the stupendous accumulation of historic events peruse in the Apocalypse a preconcerted scheme of then future history accurately recorded, and a correct detail of complex, successive, and distant revolutions now largely executed,—we, I may truly say, are furnished with a miraculous *confirmation* of our *faith*. Let all the objections that ever were urged against the truth of Christ and the veraciousness of the scriptures; and which many a christian may, for want of information, perhaps be unable to answer or satisfactorily to reconcile (though I myself declare that I know of none such, though I am not unacquainted with the arguments of opponents)—let them all be placed against the weight of this prophetic history and its fulfilment as furnished by the secular historians of all varieties of persuasion;—and what will they amount to? Truly there is, even at this day, a blessedness attendant on them that hear the words of this prophecy; and that blessing is—an ample *confirmation* of their faith and hope.

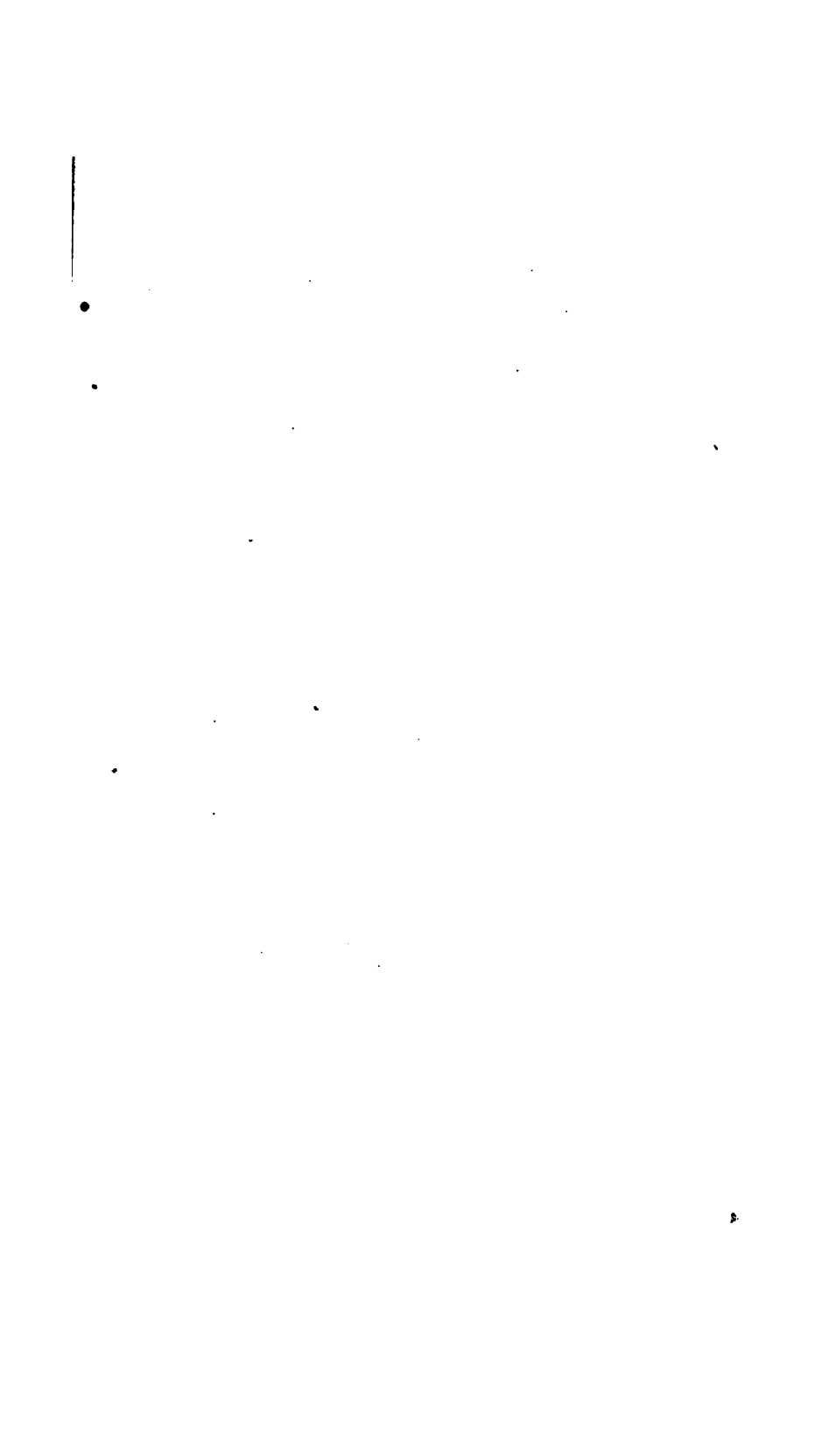
So manifest indeed is the accordance between history and the Apocalypse thus unaffectedly interpreted (and indeed interpreted by the strict rule of *principle*) that the divine authenticity of the book would now, I conceive, be contested on other grounds very different from those which have been heretofore urged by its repudiators. Hitherto the book has, either by unwise and injudicious advocates, been interpreted with violent constraint according to sectarian views and popular prejudices;—or, by vain and disappointed students despairing of satisfactory interpretation, it has been surrendered as a rhapsody of hopeless confusion;—or, by violent opponents it has been ridiculed as a farrago of pious fraud and imposition. And truly the infelicity of most commentators, and the wildness of many, have favoured a very general impression of the hopelessness and even absurdity of all attempts to resolve it.

Indeed it is somewhat surprising that a book so utterly unintelligible and incapable of application as it must have been to the apprehension of the corrupt divines of the middle centuries, should still have been retained amongst the *recognised writings* of the Apostles. But now, when neither its

antiquity is questioned, nor its historical correctness can be impugned,—infidelity *might* urge—that at that date of the composition of the Apocalypse, the destinies both of the *Jewish State* and of the *Roman empire* were determinable by *human sagacity*, with nearly absolute precision. It might urge—that *any figurative* sketch of the probable, obvious, and in many respects unavoidable issue of the political and religious affairs of the then world, must necessarily have applied with sufficient accuracy to the general facts of future history. Thus, the destruction of the Jewish state by Roman power, rigour and rapacity, might, in a conjectural view of the natural current of political events then indicated by the circumstances and genius of the two respective nations, have been pronounced to be more than probable: just as at the present day might safely be predicted the downfall of any degenerate, corrupt, and defenceless or vastly inferior, but bigoted and vain-glorious petty state, before the encroachments and rigour of an arbitrary, vigorous, and vastly greater neighbour. Again: that such an overgrown and corrupt empire as ancient Rome should at some future period decay and crumble by its own weight; and that the nations of its *Western* portion should become dismembered, maintaining severally an independent political vitality supported by the indomitable genius of the European character; while its *eastern* portion should long withstand the less rigorous elements of its milder regions; eventually falling after the usual mode of Asiatic precedent; were events so natural, that political sagacity incurred perhaps no more risk in predicting them, than it now incurs in predicting a similar issue to any cumbrous, heterogeneous, and oppressive empire when its constituent nations shall no longer derive protection and profit to counterbalance the exactions and rapacity of their metropolitan head. Again: that the absurdities of paganism should be renounced by the growing intelligence of mankind, and should eventually become extinct by the progress of christianity or of any other faith which afforded good promise of a more rational religion:—was an event at least as susceptible of prediction as—that the worship of Juggernaut will hereafter yield to any variety

of the christian name, which by fair professions may first insinuate itself, and afterwards become sufficiently prevalent to contest its ascendancy, and attempt its extinction. And that the new religion and perversions of christianity (however pure in its primitive, divine, and apostolic simplicity) should propagate themselves *by conforming with men's ordinary sentiments, tastes, maxims, and moral habits, in accommodation of the natural propensities and prejudices of the human mind*; and should thus eventually become utterly corrupt in practice, as they were already degenerate in principle; inevitably assuming the character of vain pretension, dictation, bigotry, ambition, rapacity, and intolerance; and affording full scope to the utmost excesses of human depravity;—these, I say, were events as certain as are the physiological and historical facts, that mankind, when presenting to view the dark side and downward tendency of the human character, are prone to credulity, superstition, bigotry, avarice, tyranny, and cruelty. And that mankind, after a long slumber of intellectual function, and a long waning of moral principle, should at length begin to awake; presenting to view the crescent side of the human character, and manifesting its better tendencies: thus becoming more instructed in humanity, ashamed of the extravagancies of mock christianity, outraged by its enormities, and weary of its oppressions;—was as certain as that time only is wanting to detect every new imposture, and to disgust even infatuation. Finally: that the advocates of the christian faith in its purity, simplicity, exclusiveness, and incompatibility with spiritual and worldly aggrandizement, should be subject to the bitterest enmity of Jews and of Pagans who rejected the name of Christ, and of professors who abused it and depraved its doctrines; employing their profession as a cloak of moral corruption, and a political engine of sectarian elevation, avarice, ambition, superstition, and fraud;—were events as plain as—that he who would not provoke the displeasure of mankind, must beware of stumbling, *not indeed against their professions, but against the principles on which they justify their enormities, reconcile their inconsistencies, indulge their passions, and advance and maintain their monopoly of worldly interests.* All these were events of general application;

deducible from reason and moral and political philosophy, and conformable with uniform historical precedent and universal practice. And therefore each of them being thus within the field of political probability and moral certainty, they were indeed all brought within a certain scope of human foresight or sagacity. But though each and all of them were circumstances of *utmost probability*, they were none of them circumstances of *absolute necessity*. And of so many probable but not inevitable events,—that all and each of them should have actually occurred in the precise order and exact mode, and *with the minute circumstantiality* wherein prediction had detailed and *complicated* them, without one failure or error either in the order, complication, mode or circumstantiality of accomplishment even of the more remote incidents,—this, I say, is not the manner of human sagacity; it is divine prescience. And doubtless, such a display or revelation of the hand and future providence of God was vouchsafed to his servants, for the very purpose of constituting a standing miracle or permanent and powerful confirmation of their faith, a support of their hope, and a consolation under oppression. At the same time, it is admirably manifest to all who shall perceive *the nature* of Messiah's kingdom, that they who are blind to the things and nature of this peculiar kingdom, and who are consequently *conscientiously* opposed to its establishment—must necessarily be *deceived* by the prophecy, *confounded* by the development of history or God's providence and consequently deprived of the consolation or promised "*blessedness*" accruing from a view of the predictions and verification of truth. More painful still the reflection—how *can* they, under the persuasions of an erroneous principle dictating an erroneous system, act otherwise than in *rejection* of God's promises, and in *resistance* of his purposes; thus *adjudging themselves unworthy* of participation in the spiritual glory and benefits of *the kingdom of God or the prosperity of Jerusalem*.



— 44 —

